

Crackdown targets violence and burglaries

PATRICIA WYNNE DAVIES
Political Correspondent

Michael Howard's proposals, outlined to the Tory Party conference yesterday, would see the end of automatic early release for prisoners, a tough new sentencing regime for violence and sex offences and, for the first time, minimum sentences for burglars and hard drug dealers.

To the longest standing ovation of the conference so far, the Home Secretary declared that

THE PROPOSALS

under White Paper proposals covering England and Wales, to be published next year, "model prisoners" would get a little time off their sentences for good behaviour.

"Everyone else should serve their sentence in full... no more half-time sentences for full-time crimes," Mr Howard said. The final shape of the crackdown will be decided after consultation on the as yet uncosted

White Paper, and included in a Crime Bill in the parliamentary session after next.

But under radical new proposals for the sentencing of serious violent and sexual offenders, Mr Howard said there was a "strong case" for saying that anyone convicted for the second time should automatically receive a life sentence. These prisoners would only be released when they no longer posed a risk to the public, Mr Howard said, adding: "If

they continued to pose a risk, life really would mean life."

The White Paper will suggest that burglars and hard-drug dealers be subject to minimum sentences on a third offence - reflecting the American "three strikes and you're out" policy. Mr Howard said: "Burglary is a foul crime. It defiles people's memories." He added: "The same is true of dealers in hard drugs. They prey on the young, the lonely and the vulnerable."

Mr Howard told last week's

Police Superintendents' Association annual conference that he was "surprised" at a survey showing that only 10 per cent of first-time burglars were jailed by magistrates' courts. In Crown Courts the average sentence for burglars with 10 or more previous convictions was 17.6 months. A new minimum is likely to be several years more. The move could bring some lower sentences, because of the abolition of early release and because some might sentence at

the minimum. While conceding that risk at a briefing for journalists, Mr Howard insisted that the overall effect would be stiffer sentences. At present, the only minimum sentences are the mandatory life sentence for murder and the one-year automatic ban for drink-driving.

The maximum sentence for serious violent and sexual crimes is life imprisonment. But said Mr Howard, offenders did not always get life, and could offend again. Under the

Home Secretary's proposals, the net would be spread wider, imposing a life sentence for second offences of attempted murder, threat or conspiracy to murder, manslaughter, infanticide, and manslaughter due to diminished responsibility.

The same would apply to wounding or any other act which endangers life, rape, going to a crime equipped with a weapon, and unlawful sexual intercourse or incest with a girl under 13.

Under current rules on the release of prisoners, offenders jailed for less than four years are automatically released after serving half their sentence. Those serving more can be released at the half-way point and, if not, are automatically released on licence at the two-thirds point. Mr Howard proposes to sweep that away, replacing it with strictly limited, and earned, remission of 15 per cent of the sentence for model behaviour.

Portrait of a judge: Controversy has followed the legal chief who sought the common touch

Liberal approach of a man used to courting trouble

JASON BENNETTO

With nearly 40 years experience as a street-wise criminal lawyer from the north of England, Lord Taylor, the Lord Chief Justice, is used to confrontation.

Drawing on his own roots - he comes from a Jewish family in Newcastle, where his father was a doctor - he has tried to distance himself from the popular view of the judiciary as establishment, and therefore conservative, minded. He has always thought his Jewish background helped make him more sympathetic and liberal. Asked why he thought he had become Lord Chief Justice, Lord Taylor, 66, said: "I would like to think that I am not thought to be, rightly or wrongly, wholly out of touch - that I am in the mainstream of life in the country."

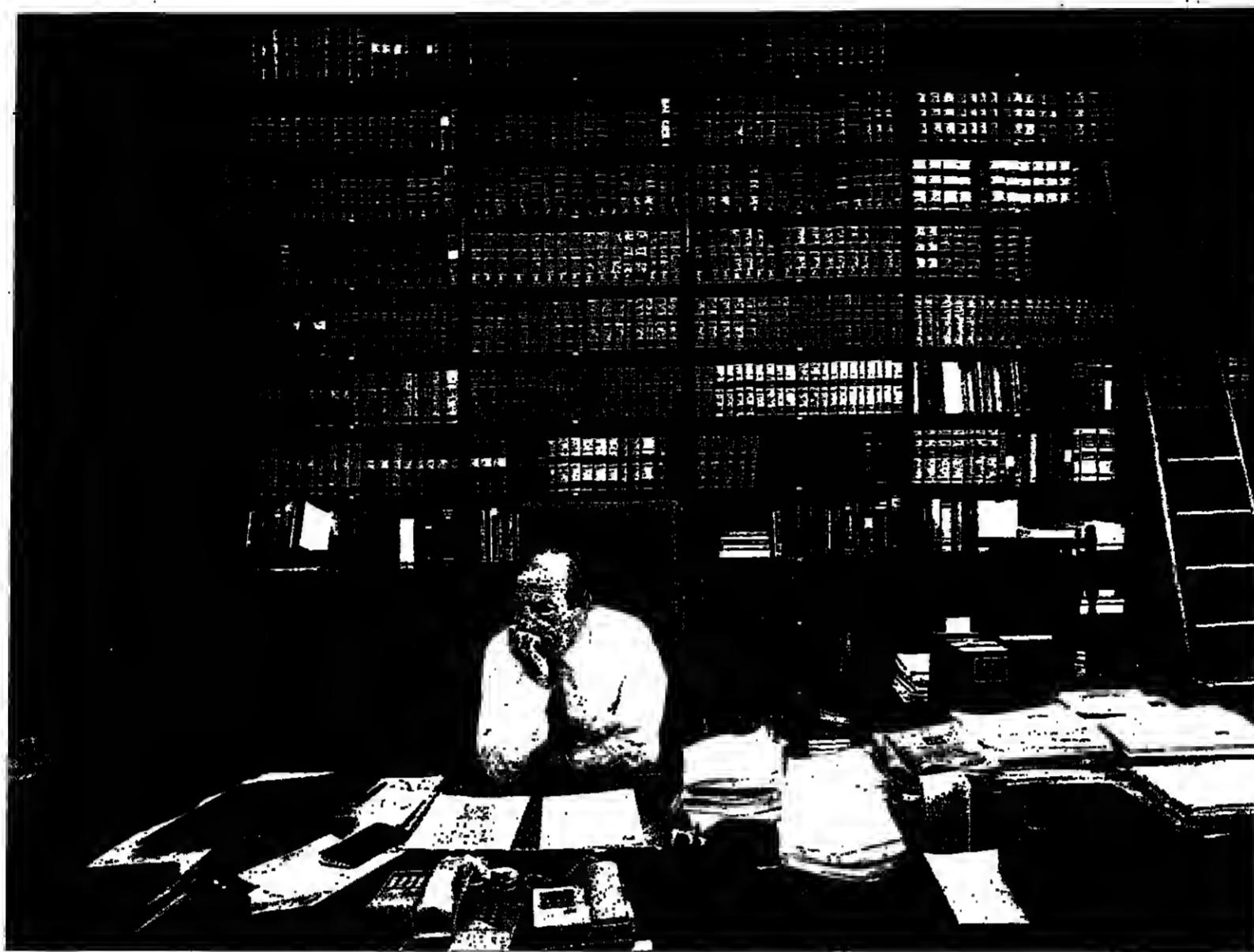
Peter Taylor was educated at a Newcastle's Royal Grammar school he won a scholarship to go to Cambridge University.

He was called to the Bar in 1954 and as a barrister, prosecuted some high profile trials including those of the corrupt property developer, John Poulson, and the former Liberal Leader, Jeremy Thorpe. . .

He became a High Court judge in 1980 and an Appeal Court judge in 1988 until he became Lord Chief Justice. He headed the inquiry into the Hillsborough disaster in 1989. A keen supporter of Newcastle's rugby and football teams, was able to reflect on his own recollection of the terraces and fear of being hemmed in.

Since his appointment in 1992 as the second most powerful member of the judiciary after the Lord Chancellor, he has done much to open up his new post to public scrutiny and has allowed unprecedented media access.

Lord Taylor of Gosforth, who is also the head of the court



Sitting in judgment: The Lord Chief Justice, Lord Taylor, in his London office yesterday

Photograph: John Voo

Lord Taylor's statement in full

... sentences, are necessary in some cases to protect the public. But I do not believe that the threat of longer and longer periods of imprisonment by the board will deter habitual criminals. What deters them is the likelihood of being caught, which at the moment is small. Recently the Service Charter published by one police force, The chief constable, has defined domestic burglary a priority case, and has set a target of 15% for the detection of domestic burglaries. I hope no criticism of the police, who do their best within the limited resources they are given.

But does anyone believe that a procession of burglar who applies his fist of muscle to the door of 20 or more houses will be deterred by the possible additional risk of months or even two years to his sentence?

... minimum sentences are inconsistent with doing justice according to the circumstances of each case. Instead of limited judicial discretion by introducing unreasonably strict sentences on the sentence, the police should be trained with the resources they have to bring criminals before the courts as quickly as possible.

Rift marks new low in confrontational relationship

The Lord Chief Justice's extraordinary public condemnation of the Home Secretary's latest "lock 'em up" initiative, marks an all-time low in their relationship.

Judges guard their independence jealously and it will have been Michael Howard's threat of yet more fetters on discretion that most upset Lord Taylor.

Coming at a time, when judges and the Lords are anxious to abolish the mandatory life sentence for murder - saying it is unfair to sentence a terrorist to the same penalty as a battered wife who kills - it is not surprising that Lord Taylor

deter habitual criminals," he said. "What deters them is the likelihood of being caught, which at the moment is small."

As the head of the Court of Appeal and the country's most senior professional judge, he will not have been speaking simply for himself, when he launched his attack. He had taken advice from other senior judges and been assured of their support.

Despite Mr Howard's public dismissal of Lord Taylor's comments last night, the Home Secretary must be worried by the ferocity of the attack. Lord Taylor is very influential in the House of Lords. His support for

the controversial decision to erode the right to silence was crucial to the success of last year's Criminal Justice Act.

But he was also instrumental in waterding down its impact.

He is a powerful enemy to have made. But he is not the first judge to have spoken out against Mr Howard's tough criminal justice policy. In 1993, Lord Woolf described his last law-and-order initiative as short sighted and irresponsible. The easy option which has a miserable record of failure is to send more and more people to prison regardless of the consequences, including the shocking

waste of resources which could be spent elsewhere." Seven other judges came out in support.

Mr Howard was stung, but clearly not deterred from incurring judicial wrath when Lord Taylor made clear his views at an informal meeting last week. While such chats between judges and ministers have taken place for many years, it is only since Lord Taylor took office in 1992 that judges have so damagingly and publicly voiced their views outside court.

Lord Lane, his predecessor, was known to have had violent disagreements with previous

Home Secretaries, but remained silent.

The judges' desire to speak out has coincided with their changing role as law makers in Britain's unwritten constitution. The "new" judiciary are increasingly called upon, and unafraid, to protect the citizen against the state. Judicial review of government decisions has been a big growth area in the law. And Michael Howard has been forced to amend legislation and change government policy more than any other minister.

HEATHER MILLS

Home Affairs Correspondent

Delegates drool over tough line

PATRICIA WYNNE DAVIES

Two, or three, strikes and you're out - reflecting the American approach to repeat offenders - served Michael Howard well yesterday, ensuring one of the smoothest rides ever for a Home Secretary at a Tory conference.

Delighted representatives streamed out of the debate repeatedly declaring that the Home Secretary had made a "wonderful" speech, with the only complaint being that he had not yet introduced compulsory identity cards.

One delegate, Alistair Glanville, from Wells, was boozed by some representatives for speaking out against them.

Mr Howard said later that consultation on the proposal had only finished a fortnight ago.

Yesterday's announcements meanwhile spawned high praise. Daniel Walton, from Bromsgrove, said: "It was an impressive speech. I am disappointed he didn't mention identity cards because that would be a tremendous way forward. But the idea of minimum sentences should be extended to magistrates' courts so they are consistent nationally, and it should be extended to other offences." Like other representatives, Mr Walton applauded.

Walant Singh Bahadur from Coventry South, said Mr Howard had made a "wonderful speech, promoting law and order. Five years should mean five years," he said. He was unimpressed by the criticisms of Lord Taylor, the Lord Chief Justice. "The Government has to frame the law. The judges follow the law," he said.

But if representatives were inclined to ignore Lord Taylor's call for more moxie for the police to catch criminals, there were concerns about the costs of a rising jail population. Sophia Taylor, of West Lancashire, said the speech was "wonderful and very necessary" but added: "How will they pay to put them in prison?"

Barbara Cookman, a JP, voiced concerns about a dramatically scaled down remission system. "There must be hope of coming out and incentives to good behaviour."

Labour attacks 'bizarre mix'

HEATHER MILLS

Home Secretary Michael Howard's latest anti-crime package was widely condemned by the opposition and virtually all in the criminal justice system, including judges, lawyers and prison staff.

Jack Straw, shadow home secretary said Mr Howard's speech was "a bizarre mixture" of complacency and desperation. "He was complacent about the level of recorded crime, which has more than doubled under the Tories, and desperate because he knows that the Tories are no longer trusted on law and order."

Alan Beith, Liberal Democrat home affairs spokesman said Mr Howard's proposals were "merely window-dressing" for the party faithful. Echoing



Critic: Jack Straw

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Forget Shakespeare and Pam Ayres, Kipling's poem is chosen as the nation's favourite

IF

If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
But make allowance for their doubting too;
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or being hated, don't give way to hating.
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise:

If you can dream — and not make dreams your master;
If you can think — and not make thoughts your aim;
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two impostors just the same;
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools:

If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings
And never breathe a word about your loss;
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them: "Hold on!"

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with Kings — nor lose the common touch,
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,
If all men count with you, but none too much;
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And — which is more — you'll be a Man, my son!

Rudyard Kipling

British voters keep their heads and say 'If' is the best of all

MARIANNE MACDONALD

Arts Reporter

A poll to find the nation's favourite poem — an event which could have provided Britain's most embarrassing publicity since the survey which found that Rolf Harris was the public's best-known artist — ended respectfully, if not with a bang, last night.

After six days of voting the people's choice, with more than double the votes of its nearest rival, turned out to be Rudyard Kipling's *If* — admittedly redundant of the former O-Level syllabus, but the work of a Nobel laureate come the less.

The rest of the Top 10, however, turned up some surprises. They were Tennyson's *The Lady of Shallot*; Walter de la Mare's *The Listener*; Stevie Smith's *Not Waving but Drowning*; Wordsworth's *Daffodils* ("He wandered lonely as a cloud"); Keats's *To Autumn* and his *Ode to a Nightingale*; WB Yeats' *The Lake Isle of Innisfree*; *The Lake Isle of Innisfree*; WB Yeats' *To Autumn* and his *Ode to a Nightingale*; John Keats' *He Wishes for the Cloths of Heaven*; WB Yeats' *To Autumn* and his *Ode to a Nightingale*.

The choice of *If* comes as something as a relief to staff of the BBC's *The Bookworm*, who organised the poll and arranged for the acclaimed Shakespearean actor, Sir Ian McKellen, to read the top choices on BBC1 at 10.20pm tonight.

There had been pessimistic speculation that the public would go for a poem rather lighter in tone, such as Pam Ayres's *Oh, I Wish I'd Looked After Me Teeth*, a ditty on the corrosive effect of toffee.

National Poetry Day: for better or worse?

William Seighart successfully broke down the barriers to make poetry fun

One of the oddest things about trying to start a National Poetry Day some 13 months ago was not most of the people I spoke to thought that there already was one. And, coupled with that sadness, came the excitement that almost everyone was willing to help.

What began as an idea in the nth quick became a bandwagon that swept through Britain and Ireland, supported by what can only be described as a group of "poetry commandos" sandbagging broadcasters, publishers and publicists to back this fanciful theme. Any doubts as to the potential pitfalls were set aside as venues were booked, poem cards and posters printed and powerful organisations like the BBC and the Arts Council offered enthusiastic support.

Why do it? Because it's fun. We set out to break down the barriers and embarrassment associated with reading poetry

aloud. If you can break through our traditional Anglo-Saxon reticence and allow more of the Celtic into our lives we would all admit to liking a little poetry from somewhere. Poetry is a magnificent companion in this busy modern world, often giving us a vocabulary for emotions we cannot express.

The public response to National Poetry Day shows that we have succeeded in our aim — poetry is alive, well and kicking. It was and is a call to arms for everyone who loves poetry to join in the fun. I hope the work of the Forward Poetry Trust, with organisations like The Poetry Society, help to dispel any remaining prejudice people have about the role of poetry in their lives. Here's to next year.

William Seighart is Director of Forward Publishing and Chairman of the Forward Poetry Trust which administers National Poetry Day

The Top Ten

- 1) 'If', Rudyard Kipling
- 2) 'The Lady of Shallot', Alfred, Lord Tennyson
- 3) 'The Listener', Walter de la Mare
- 4) 'Not Waving but Drowning', Stevie Smith
- 5) 'Daffodils', William Wordsworth
- 6) 'To Autumn', John Keats
- 7) 'The Lake Isle of Innisfree', WB Yeats
- 8) 'Dulce et Decorum Est', Wilfred Owen
- 9) 'Ode to a Nightingale', John Keats
- 10) 'He Wishes for the Cloths of Heaven', WB Yeats

But although it won a following, it was more than balanced by the votes for poems by Byron, Keats, Robert Frost, Gerard Manley Hopkins, Wil-

fred Owen, John Donne and Thomas Gray.

The favourite modern poets to emerge from the survey were Carol Ann Duffy and Simon Armitage, while the children's vote was overwhelmingly in favour of Quentin Blake and Alain Ahiberg.

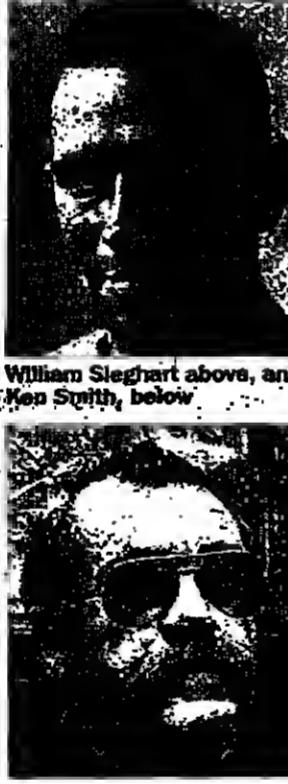
The only great British poet who failed to win a respectable share was, oddly enough, William Shakespeare, even though the bookmakers Ladbrokes had laid odds of two to one that Sonnet 18 ("Shall I compare thee to a summer's day") would win.

In fact, none of the poems chosen by the bookies as top favourites — William Blake's *The Tyger*, John Donne's *Holy Sonnet*, Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Sonnet From The Portuguese* ("How do I love thee? Let me count the ways") and WH Auden's *Funeral Blues*, famously quoted in the film *Four Weddings And A Funeral* — came close.

Some poems nominated completely baffled Daisy Goodwin, *The Bookworm's* executive producer, and poetry experts. Last night, they were trying to identify Anne Marie Cusack's *Paradise* (15 votes) and Hazel Shrumkin's *My Memories*.

Other problems stemmed from the difficulties experienced by the staff drafted in to decipher the names of the poets and poems from the answerphone messages left by callers. They recorded numerous votes for a weird character called Lord Bryon, while other suspicious nominations included *Allergy In A Country Churchyard*, *Goldy Gwackerman Est*, *The Bluebells of O'Meara*, *Am AA Milne's Vespa* and *Not Wading But Drowning*.

Ms Goodwin said she was delighted with the results. "The range of votes is incredible. Apart from Hazel Shrumkin and Anne Marie Cusack, pretty much every well-known poet got votes. It shows that the great British public is a lot more discerning about poetry than anyone would give them credit for," she said.



William Seighart above, and



Ken Smith, below

But poet Ken Smith ruefully admits that poetry's share of the market is shrinking.

National Poetry Day is here again, the second of its ilk. And yes, I have to say that anything that promotes poetry has to be useful.

And apt. In the last two decades writing poetry became one of the few growth industries in this ailing isle. As the dole queues lengthened it seemed more and more people turned to writing. Groups and centres and courses sprang up — contemporary poetry and creative writing entered the national curriculum, poets entered schools and pubs and prisons. For the young and upcoming there are more and more glittering prizes, and in recent years young poets have been going off like bombs. They now talk about their "careers".

Even so, a recent Arts Council inquiry into who knows what in poetry was a triumph for the familiar and the banal. And anyway, what's it all for, when the market share is shrinking?

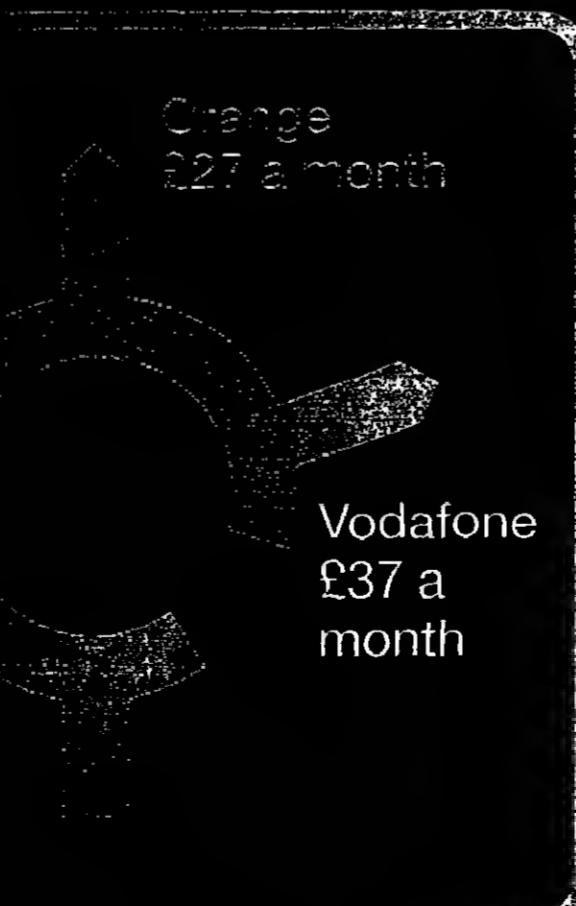
The collapse of the Net Book Agreement means less poetry will get published, with fewer bookshops in which to find it. Recent major casualties in the poetry publishing trade represent decisions made not by poetry lovers or promoters but by accountants. Result: more poets chasing fewer publishers. Less volumes, slim or otherwise.

Anyway, and here's the rub: last year on this day there was a lot of poetic activity by poets. This year, it seems to be readings of favourite poems by celebrities, the safe familiar verse declaimed by the safe and familiar faces.

And what will I be doing on National Poetry Day?
Bugger All. Babble.

Ken Smith's publications include *The Poet Reclining*, *Terra*, *Wormwood*, *The Heart of the Border*, *Tender to the Queen of Spain*, *Inside Time*, *Berlin Coming in from the Cold*.

The nation's choice: Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936), whose classic poem 'If', was a favourite of Marie Curie, his contemporary and a fellow Nobel prize-winner



A recent independent survey showed that taking the wrong turning could prove costly.

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news

The Rosemary West trial: Woman accused of 10 murders had 'open marriage', say Cromwell Street boarders

Lodgers tell of couple driven by sex

WILL BENNETT

Sex dominated the household at 25 Cromwell Street, with Rosemary and Frederick West admitting that they had an open marriage and both of them sleeping with lodgers. Winchester Crown Court was told yesterday.

Shirley Robinson, a lodger whose remains were later found with those of a foetus at the house in Gloucester, became pregnant by Mr West while Mrs West had sex with two men on the first night they moved into a bed sitting room there.

"They used to embarrass me quite a lot by talking about their open marriage or sex," said Elizabeth Brewer, who moved into Cromwell Street as a lodger in 1977.

The court also heard that Lynda Gough, whose remains were found in the cellar, was a regular visitor to the house where she had affairs with several lodgers and that Joani Mott, another victim, rented a room there.

Mrs West, 41, denies murdering 10 girls and young women whose remains were found at Cromwell Street and at the Wests' previous home in Gloucester.

Mr West, who was charged with 12 murders, was found dead in his prison cell on 1 January this year.

Mrs Brewer told the court yesterday that she moved into a £7 a week bedroom at 25 Cromwell Street when she was 17 and discovered that Mrs

West had what she called her "special room" which was always kept locked.

She said: "I would constantly be informed about their open marriage and that Rose had her boyfriends and Fred had his girlfriends. They were quite happy to have an open marriage."

"There would be times when they mentioned that they knew about people's personal sex lives and Mrs West said that when she retired she was going to spend her whole retirement engaged in sexual activity."

Mrs Brewer said that both Shirley Robinson, 16, and Mrs West were pregnant at the time and that one day she saw Shirley and Mr West kissing and cuddling outside the girl's room.

She became friendly with Shirley who asked her if she could stay in Mrs Brewer's room. She told the court: "She needed to keep away from Mr and Mrs West. She spent all the time in my room."

She said that "there was a breakdown in communication" between Shirley and the couple and that Mr West told her that Shirley was becoming too possessive towards him. Shirley vanished in May, 1978.

Earlier, Benjamin Stanniland, another former lodger at the house, recalled how Mrs West got into bed with him and a friend called Alan Davies on their first night at the house. This was the only time that they had sex with her.

Mr Stanniland said that he met Lynda Gough in Gloucester and brought her back to Cromwell Street where she he-



Ben Stanniland (left) and David Evans, lodgers at the Cromwell Street home of Rose (top) and Fred West

added that Mrs West did not seem upset by this.

Linda Greening, a neighbour who lived directly opposite 25 Cromwell Street told the court that she was pregnant at the same time as Mrs West and Shirley and was invited over for a cup of tea.

She said that she was "shocked" when Mrs West told her that Mr West was the father of Shirley's unborn child. She

came a regular visitor over the next six to seven months.

He said that he also remembered Caroline Owens, who was the victim of a sex attack by the Wests for which they were subsequently fined. Brian Leveson QC, prosecuting, asked: "Did you see her after she had stopped living at the house?"

Mr Stanniland replied: "Only on one occasion. I went downstairs to bang on Mrs West's door to borrow the Hoover to do

some cleaning up and on opening the door she was there."

Under cross examination by Richard Ferguson QC, defending Mrs West, he said that Mrs Owens was not crying and that he did not notice any bruising on her face.

He said that during the period of about 14 months that he spent at Cromwell Street in 1972-3, the Gloucestershire police raided tenants at the house looking for drugs.

This was confirmed by David

Evans, another former tenant, who was convicted and fined for possessing cannabis. He said that drug squad officers came to the house three times during this period.

Asked about Mrs West, Mr Evans said: "She was the landlady but she would come upstairs now and again because she liked sex." He said they had sexual intercourse once.

He told the jury of eight

men and four women that he had also had a sexual relationship with Lynda Gough for a time but she suddenly stopped visiting the house.

Mr Evans said: "Rose came up one morning and said that Lynda Gough had hit her daughter while babysitting and that she would not be coming back to the house again."

The last time he saw Lynda was when she had an argument with Alan Davies, another lodger, and it was after that that Mrs West told him that she had been sacked as the babysitter.

The jury was also read records from Gloucester Royal Hospital yesterday. The first showed that Mr West was admitted to the casualty unit at 25 minutes past midnight on January 3, 1974, with a severe laceration to his right hand.

This was a week after Lucy Parlington, whose remains were found in the Cromwell Street cellar, disappeared in Cheltenham. A knife was found with her bones in the grave.

The second showed that Mrs West was admitted to the hospital on 13 August 1974 with a cut to her right hand.

When she arrived at the casualty department she gave the reason for the wound as "playing around with knives".

The jury will visit 25 Cromwell Street next Thursday.

Mr Justice Mantell, the judge, said he had reservations about the trip but granted their request to look round the house and garden.

The case continues today.

Young blames BR for 56% fares hike

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR
Transport Correspondent

Sir George Young, the Secretary of State for Transport, stirred up a political row by blaming British Rail for the 56 per cent fares increased imposed on a group of commuters in the West Country.

In a statement issued yesterday, Sir George also said that it was the type of problem which privatisation was designed to solve, but his remarks were immediately dismissed as "ridiculous" by Labour.

The increase was imposed by the Regional Railways South Wales and West train company for early-morning travellers between Exmouth and Paignton and came to light following a complaint by the father of 13-year-old schoolboy Steven Silverman.

John Silverman found that the seven-week season ticket for his son to travel the seven miles to Torre station, Torquay, to go to school had risen from £38.25 to £59.60.

A letter from South Wales and West to Mr Silverman said that the price changes were made because of an "extreme demand situation". Apparently 250 people, mainly local students, have been trying to cram onto the 150-seater 7.20am train and the return 4.12pm was also very overcrowded.

The rail company says it does not have the additional rolling stock to increase the length of the train.

Sean O'Neill, the secretary of the local passenger watchdog, RUCC, said that his organisation had not been alerted about the rise by the train operator. "There is supposed to be a statutory duty for them to inform us but the system has not worked since the reorganisation of the railways in 1994," he said.

Eryl Jones, spokesman for South Wales and West said that the increase on the Exmouth to Paignton line was unique: "Overall, our fares went up in May by just under the national inflation rate. And several fares have gone down."

IN BRIEF

Toxic gas blamed for miner's death

The Mines Inspectorate last night launched an inquiry into the death of a miner thought to have been asphyxiated after an inrush of gas 650 metres below ground at Thoresby colliery, Nottinghamshire.

Andrew Fielding, 39, is the first of two to be a pit run by RJB Minin, which last year bought the bulk of British Coal. Two other miners and four rescue workers were treated for breathing problems. The National Union of Mineworkers said miners in the pit had been complaining for weeks about oil fumes.

Boy in murder case

A 13-year-old boy is to appear in court today accused of the murder of a vagrant found burning in a park at Eastleigh, Hampshire, last month. Alan Whittle, 50, died from his injuries last week.

Mail jobs threat

The Royal Mail dismissed claims by the Communication Workers Union that a leaked management report reveals plans to axe 1,200 full and temporary jobs over the next six months in Northern Ireland and Scotland.

Three die in arson

A murder inquiry was launched after Diane Jones, 22, and her daughter, aged two and one, died in a fire at their home in Merthyr Tydfil, Mid Glamorgan. Police found petrol around the front door.

Sikh wins review

Karamjit Singh Chahal, 47, a Sikh who has been held in jail for five years while he tries to seek deportation to India, was granted a judicial review in the High Court of his detention. The Government says he is a terrorist.

Beggar banned

Michael Walker, 41, a beggar, was banned "indefinitely" from St Mary's Church, Saffron Walden, and St John's, Stamford, both in Essex, after a High Court judge granted an injunction following complaints he stole from collection boxes at abused visitors.

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THE INDEPENDENT

Clarke targets Middle England

COLIN BROWN
Chief Political Correspondent

The Chancellor yesterday warned the conference that cuts in public expenditure to pay for tax cuts could mean changes in policy.

Urging his party to support the spending cuts, which will be announced with the Budget in November, Kenneth Clarke said "controlling spending requires policy change as well".

He also reaffirmed the Government's priority to low inflation at the heart of its economic strategy. Mr Clarke sought to offer the hard-pressed Tory voters in "Middle England" the prospect of rewards in the Budget.

But he was given a lukewarm applause at the end of a debate on the economy that exposed some of the widespread unrest in the party over the past increases in taxes and the plight of home buyers.

He was given a dutiful standing ovation, with Baroness Thatcher and the Prime Minister symbolically side-by-side on the platform for the first time, but registered one of the lowest readings of the week on the *Independent's* clapping meter.

Facing calls from the hall for tax allowances for housewives, and the restoration of mortgage tax relief for home owners, Mr Clarke said many felt "the time has come for some reward in the next Budget".

Using the words of Francis Urquhart in *The House of Cards* to confirm their hopes would be fulfilled, Mr Clarke went on: "You may think that - but I couldn't possibly comment."

The Chancellor made it clear he would direct his Budget at



Laughing matter: The Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, in jocular mood at Blackpool yesterday

"We will only cut taxes when it is in the interests of the British economy to do so. The British people are a responsible people who would not want it any other way. So when we cut taxes, it will be for keeps. Mr Blair is terrified that we might be able to cut taxes."

The Labour leader was "just the smile on the face of the Labour movement", he said. Real Labour, behind its grinning leader, was "gritting its teeth and biting its tongue till after the next election".

Mr Clarke urged supporters to write to him with evidence of Labour spending pledges, and made it clear the Tories will seek to repeat the 1992 election campaign against Labour's alleged "tax bombshell".

In the debate, Edward Russell (South Shields) said the cut 10 per cent cut in Miras had caused "a great slump in our popularity".

A three-year rolling programme of tax cuts, starting in the next Budget, was demanded by Robert Guy (Richmond). Pauline Blou (West Midlands) said married one-earner families were at a disadvantage compared to two-earner parents and single parents. "Transferable tax allowances would help," she said. "We are asking you to give one-earner couples the tax advantages that dual-earner couples have."

John Godfrey, a former ministerial adviser, was heckled when he urged the Chancellor to adopt Gordon Brown's plan for a windfall profits tax on the privatised utilities. "Shame," shouted one representative, showing Mr Clarke he will have no easy choices.

Photograph: Brian Harris

"Middle England" and his speech targeted the demands for help in nearly 200 motions for the economic debate.

"It will be a Budget based on traditional values. It will be a Budget that I am looking for

ward to a lot more than the last two," said Mr Clarke, who raised £3.9bn in taxes in 1994.

"It will be a Budget that addresses Middle England, and Middle Wales and Middle Scotland and Middle Ulster.

"The people who are hard-working and self-reliant. Our people who take responsibility for themselves and for their families. Our people who want to give their children a better

start than they had themselves." Mr Clarke added: "Cutting the tax we want to cut can't be done in one go. It must not be done thoughtlessly and it must be the start of a process continuing into the future."

The Chancellor made it clear he would direct his Budget at

impressed Margaret Thatcher, as he led a drive to counter Tony Blair's "young country" theme.

Party strategists are acutely aware that the average age of Tory party members is 62, and that the representatives in Blackpool are markedly older than the delegates to last week's Labour conference in Brighton.

But Mr Hague claimed

young people today are in tune with Tory policies and beliefs.

He said: "For the first time since the 1930s we are seeing a young generation which is not the

natural ally of the political left."

He went on: "When I went to university, I used to debate with wild-eyed Marxist idealists who filled debating chambers with calls for unilateral disarmament and nationalisation."

Now young people believed in "choice, freedom, independence".

But he admitted: "No one

younger than me can fully remember a Labour government in all its grubby and miserable detail. And it's true that that is our problem."

Mr Coe introduced some

models of Conservative youth,

who addressed the conference, and interviewed some more in the front row, in a parody of the live television coverage. Clark Stowe, 23, a teacher from Hertfordshire, Cambridge, linked Mr Coe's athletic achievements to Tory philosophy: "Children need to understand competitive games as life is competitive."

But one young Tory who did

not speak was Justin Hinchliffe,

14, the right-wing representative

who provoked a row last week

when it seemed he might be ex-

cluded from the conference.

Yesterday at the conference

Main announcements

- Automatic life sentence on second offence for violent and sexual criminals
- Stiff minimum sentence for burglars and drug dealers on third offence
- Crime Bill before election
- New crime prevention strategy
- Network of ministers across Whitehall to promote small business
- Prospect of rolling programme of tax cuts

Quotes of the day

"I have no animus against Germany, but I don't want to be ruled by them and I don't want to be ruled by them either." Bill Cash on the consequences of a federal Europe.

"I've got some advice on how to establish a small business - buy a big one, vote Labour." Andrew Bell, Horsley and Wood Green.

"Britain can't afford a Labour government just to prove that Britain can't afford a Labour government." Peter Lilley.

"You know and I know that for Britain any Labour would be hard labour." Michael Howard.

"Some of you think I talk about Prudence so much that my wife should start getting worried." Kenneth Clarke.

Good day... bad day Devil of the day



Vaclav Klaus
Prime Minister of the Czech Republic
Member of the way to Slovakia to be presented with a leather bound copy of the History of the Conservative Party



Young thugs and criminals

The big three on the fringe

- Lord Tebbit and Peter Lilley, Conservative Way Forward, 200 people
- Sir Leon Brittan, Euro-commissioner, on the Future of Europe, Conservative Group for Europe, 150 people
- Bill Cash warning against "A German Europe" Munday Club

The party to be seen at

Lord Archer, right two, more champagne
Lord Heath, right three, yet more champagne
Conference Ball, Winter Gardens
Jury Campaign for Homosexual Equality reception

Silentium

John Major with entourage enjoying a fish and chip supper at The Cottage on the outskirts of Blackpool.

Nauremeter

Michael Howard	4 min	2 min	1 min
	3 sec	6 sec	32 sec
905 decibels	900 decibels	100 decibels	

Michael Dobbs, man of the moment

Lord Tebbit who speaks volumes for party unity without uttering a word; by shaking John Major's hand on the platform

Today's speeches

Today John Major makes his address and the faithful will stand and applaud deafly before leaving for home.

Compiled by Stephen Goodwin

Hague attempts to bridge the age divide

JOHN RENTOU
Political Correspondent

The youngest Cabinet minister, William Hague, 34, yesterday made an attempt to match Labour's claim to appeal to young people in a special conference session which paralleled the series of young speakers promised by the Tories.

The balding Mr Hague, Secretary of State for Wales, recalled his first speech to the Tory conference at the even younger age of 16 in 1978, when he first

impressed Margaret Thatcher, as he led a drive to counter Tony

Blair's "young country" theme.

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He went on: "When I went to university, I used to debate with wild-eyed Marxist idealists who filled debating chambers with calls for unilateral disarmament and nationalisation."

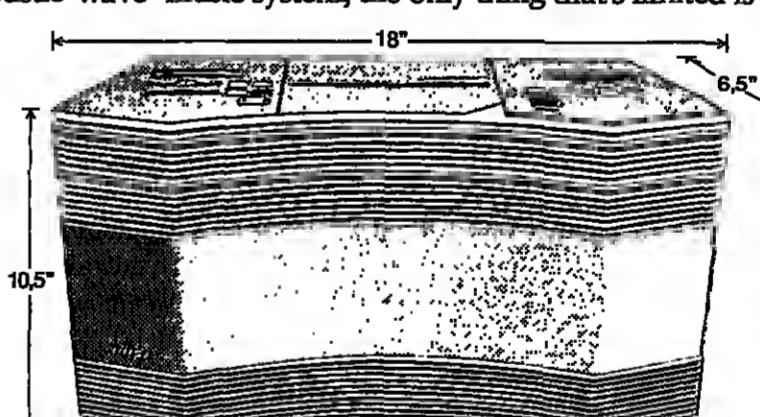
Now young people believed in "choice, freedom, independence".

But he admitted: "No one

younger than me can fully remember a Labour government in all its grubby and miserable detail. And it's true that that is our problem."

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news

TOP 10 IN BLACK

Clarke carries a 'tattered' flag

Ken Clarke still carries the tattered flag of decency in the Tory party. But the pincers are closing on him.

On the day he faced a conference trident for personal tax cuts, the inflation figure for the year to September was announced as 3.9 per cent – and that is the figure that determines the uprating of benefits and pensions.

Yesterday we saw a Chancellor having to deal with a party which has been gripped by pre-electoral panic since the halfway mark of this parliament. It would have taken incredible political nerve for the Chancellor not to offer tax cuts in the forthcoming budget. The 1922 Committee would tear him limb from limb. Yet there is no economic case at present for cuts in personal taxation, nor is it likely that they will buy the Tory party a political reprieve.

Clarke conceded yesterday that the tax cutters have won. We do not customarily think of Clarke as a coquettish politician, but he teased the conference with: "The time has come for some reward in the next budget." That has taken him beyond the point of no return.

Even as the Chancellor enlarged on what he meant by a budget that would be based on "traditional Tory values", he sought – poignantly, for me – to retrieve the irretrievable. It would be a budget for "our people who want to send their children to good state schools and be cared for by the NHS... our people who have a social conscience and want a society



ALAN HOWARTH

that can earn the wealth to give others less fortunate a helping hand." It will be interesting to see how, in November, he reconciles the two propositions – near-term tax cuts and desperately needed increases in resources for key public services.

In the rest of his speech the Chancellor, in conformity with conference ritual, bashed Labour and bashed Blair. It was half-hearted stuff and evoked a half-hearted response.

We can hardly expect a party conference to be a seminar, yet it would be courteous to citizens watching on television, and possibly a better way to win favour, if Conservative ministers would treat us to some serious discussion. Ken Clarke simply asserted that a minimum wage and the social chapter would be damaging, but didn't begin to say why. Michael Howard said,

that length, that criminals would spend longer in prison, and insisted again that "prison works". But he made no attempt to deal with the arguments against this. Labour's debates in Brighton were in a different league to Blackpool.

Alan Howarth defected from the Conservatives to the Labour Party last week.

COLIN BROWN
Chief Political Correspondent

Portillo's speech by suggesting that he had approved the policy without seeing the text. But asked whether Mr Major had seen the text, a Portillo source said: "Of course."

That confirmation will embarrass the Prime Minister, and is certain to lead to questions in the Commons next week over whether he approves of the line adopted by Mr Portillo.

Some senior party officials sought to distance John Major from the damage caused by Mr Portillo

and are looking to Mr Major to seek to repair some of the damage in his speech today to the conference.

A senior official from the European Commission sent a fax to the BBC accusing Mr Portillo of "Brussels bashing" and questioning whether the Tories could lose the election over the anti-European tone adopted by Mr Portillo.

Peter Guilford, a senior spokesman for the commission, sent the fax to the BBC to

put a question in a phone-in to Michael Heseltine, the deputy Prime Minister. Some senior Tories last night reacted with anger that a civil servant from Brussels should have intervened in British politics.

Mr Guilford's question was: How can Michael Heseltine reassure those Britons on this side of the Channel who are increasingly convinced that ministerial Brussels-bashing will erode Britain's influence in the European Union at a time

when it needs it most, and may even help lose the Conservatives the next election?

Mr Heseltine replied: "What Michael Portillo was talking about was the concept of a federal state or the surrender of

interests over British military discretion to authorities other than that of the British government. He was making it clear in language that drew attention to his views that we must be a mover and shaker in determining how that market is run is vitally important," he said.

Major drawn into Portillo row

Centre of attention: The Defence Secretary, Michael Portillo, at a Conservative Way Forward group dinner with Lord Parkinson (left)

Photograph: Brian Harris

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TORIES IN BLACKPOOL

'Irritated' Major may lose out on Nobel prize

COLIN BROWN
Chief Political Correspondent

The Prime Minister was irritated last night by rumours sweeping the Tory party conference that he may be excluded from the Nobel Peace Prize to be awarded today for bringing peace to Northern Ireland.

Rumours in Washington and Dublin suggested the Nobel panel may have decided to give the award to Albert Reynolds, the former Irish Prime Minister, and John Hume, the leader of the SDLP, excluding John Major and Gerry Adams, the Sinn Fein president.

Mr Major is among the nominations with Mr Reynolds and the announcement, due at 11am today, threatens to overshadow the Prime Minister's keynote speech to the conference, which he will be making at the same time.

Aides said last night that he had not been told who had won the \$1m prize but "he is irritated". If he wins the award it could be a remarkable feather in his cap, which could produce a substantial political bonus for the Prime Minister.

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Sir Patrick Mayhew, will seek to push the peace process forward next week in talks with Dick Spring, the Irish Foreign Minister. There are accelerating contacts between the two governments and Sinn Fein leaders in an attempt to overcome the impasse in the peace process.

Michael Ancram, the Northern Ireland minister who is acting as a go-between for the parties, had useful talks with Martin McGuinness, the Sinn Fein leader, and is hopeful it will drop opposition to a commission to oversee the decommissioning of IRA weapons.

Sinn Fein is being brought under strong pressure from Washington to agree to the international commission, which will be headed by a respected

Young and old not given quite enough rope

The party with an average age of 62 (and that is just the Young Conservatives) decided yesterday morning to prove, despite all appearances to the contrary, that it had young blood coursing through its veins. It did this by inviting a 39-year-old retired athlete and a 34-year-old slaphound to launch its focus on youth. No wonder Seb Coe and William Hague looked embarrassed; just about to face up to mid-life crisis, here were the pair of them expected to act as MCs at the Tory rave.

Coe, the runner who defied Mrs Thatcher to gain his first gold medal at Moscow, said he was going to introduce us to some young Tories whose achievements, he claimed, in their own way were equal to his. Taking a microphone, he patrolled the conference hall picking out youngsters.

"And what do you do?" he asked them like a royal on a walkabout. "I'm training to be a solicitor," said one. "Well done," he replied. At the risk of sounding unduly cynical, I'm not sure if, as an achievement, going to law school to learn the intricacies of chargeable time opportunities quite matches breaking the world 800 metres record.

The conference clearly agreed. It wasn't youth that got it back on to full throttle, stamping adolescent form. It was the return of old times, old values, old Lady Thatcher. Her Ladyship arrived on stage for the economics debate, her appearance provoking, in parts of the hall, an ovation which shot past the niggardly. Other parts, however, mainly those housing Leon Brittan, could barely bring themselves to clap.

It was a shrewd move by Kenneth Clarke to invite Lady Thatcher to share his platform. Potentially the least popular speaker of the week, he basked in her reflected glory and shone. Mainly from the upper lip, as it happens; the lights unforgivingly catching the sweat building on his face. The portly Mr Clarke sweated because his deficit grows ever bigger, his stomach breaking the restraints of his double-breasted suit to rest, comfortably, on the lectern. "In the last year we have grown

US figure. London and Dublin support the idea, and British ministers believe it remains the key to making further progress towards inclusive all-party talks.

Officials denied a report that there was early prospect of Gerry Adams sitting down with David Trimble, the Ulster Unionist leader, unless there is progress on decommissioning. But Irish sources noted a softening by Sir Patrick on three conditions, including decommissioning IRA arms, set out in Washington for Sinn Fein to take part in all-party talks.

Sir Patrick yesterday told the Tory party conference he was seeking the three conditions, but that was seen as a shift from earlier demands. He outlined the twin-track formula, for the commission and a fresh round of preliminary talks involving all the parties, which was to have been announced at the summit between Mr Major and John Bruton, the Irish premier.

The summit had to be called off by the Irish when Sinn Fein rejected the commission. Sir Patrick made it clear the commission proposal was not dead and a fresh summit could be arranged next month, before President Clinton visits London and Dublin.

If the commission can be accepted, Sinn Fein will quickly move to the bilateral or trilateral talks with the two governments, and, probably, the SDLP.

Sir Patrick said Sinn Fein could only join the all-party talks with the Ulster Unionists after progress on decommissioning. "We have proposed preliminary talks, with all parties able to contribute, to prepare the ground for the later all-party political negotiations.

"But we will not call for such all-party negotiations on the political future of Northern Ireland when we know that, for lack of the necessary confidence, those parties representing most of the people of Northern Ireland will not come," he said.



Cue applause: Baroness Thatcher, who is 70 today and will celebrate with a champagne reception at Claridge's, taking her bow on the platform yesterday. Photograph: Brian Hains

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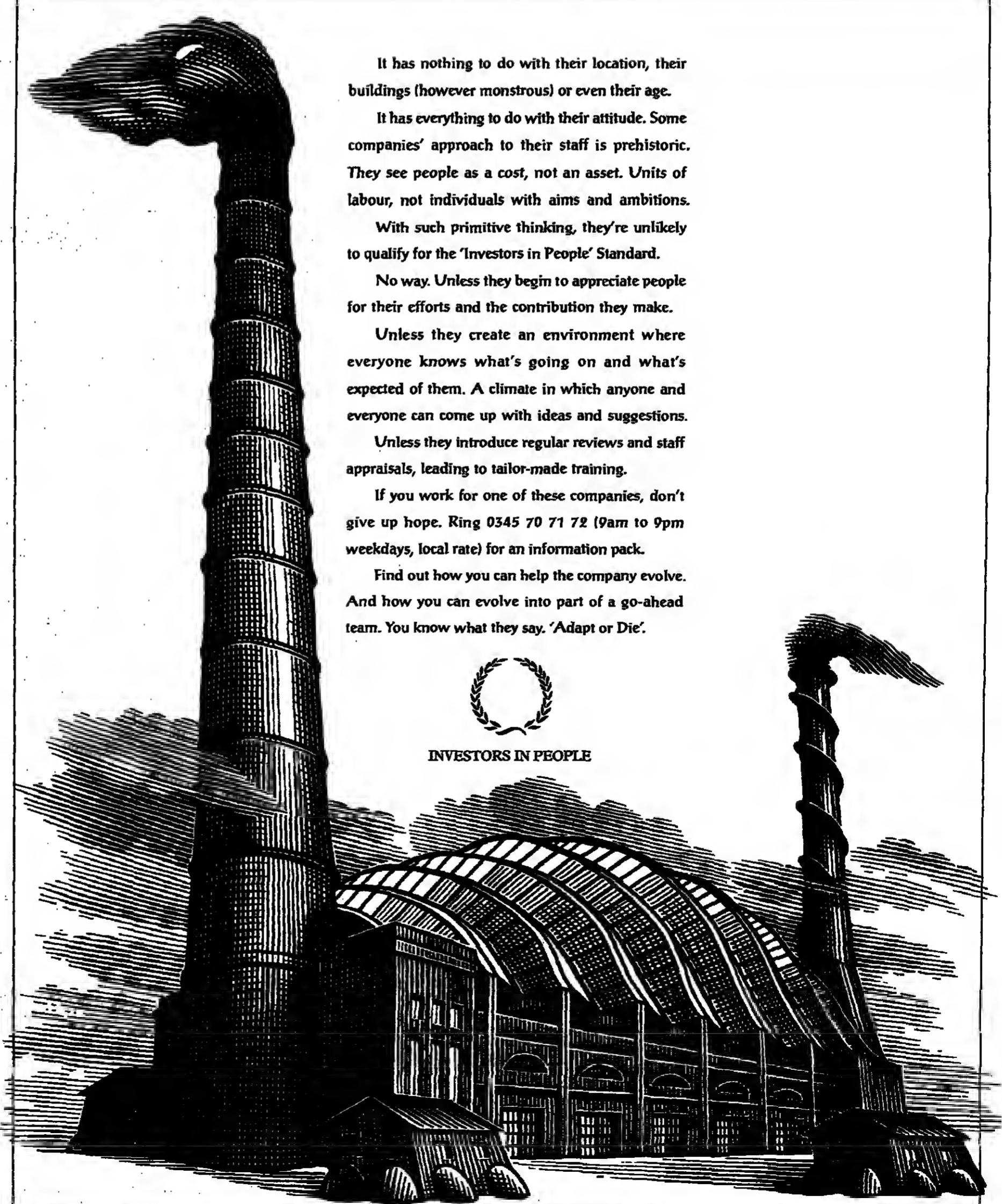
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news

Fight to televise Premier League matches looms

DAVID HELLIER and
MATHEW HORSMAN

A battle for the rights to broadcast Premier League football is looming, as rival bidders line up to wrest control of the sport's top televised matches from the clutches of Sky television.

Although Sky, which is 40 per cent owned by Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation, remains the favourite, club owners said yesterday rival bids were inevitable.

"We're starting with a blank sheet of paper and the only thing that will determine the outcome is money," said Freddie Fletcher, chief executive of Newcastle United.

The *Independent* has learned that at least three groups — sports agency IMG, media company Mirror Group and Orbit, a Rome-based broadcaster owned by Middle Eastern interests — are among the potential rivals. The groups are expected to form consortia to take on Mr Murdoch.

The arrival of competing bidders to the scene is sure to push up the price football owners can extract from the winner.

Sky has the edge going into the negotiations. It is coming towards the final stages of a five-year contract — which expires at the end of next season — worth £200m, with the Premier League, and it has the right to match any other offer. Only by bidding more than Sky's deep pockets could handle would a rival win out.

"I don't think it's right to talk publicly about the details of the negotiations," Mr Fletcher said. "What I can say is that this contract will be worth a heck of a lot more than the last one, and anybody who thinks Sky has it all sewn up just does not know the facts. I will be amazed if there's not enormous interest from broadcasters all over the world," he said.

The emergence of Rome-based Orbit appears to prove Mr Fletcher's point. Sources at the company say its eventual aim is to corner the market for pay-TV in Europe and beyond once regulations are relaxed.

Already it runs a digital multi-channel pay-TV service broadcasting news, entertainment films and sports channels to 23 countries in the Middle East and

Africa. It broadcasts Premier League and FA Cup games live to its subscribers through its sports channel. The company, which has its transmission centre outside Rome, is wholly owned by the Mawarid group from Saudi Arabia.

The Premier League is also in talks with the Endsleigh League, which represents the three lower divisions. Its representatives met yesterday in Birmingham to discuss a proposal from the Football Association that would combine rights to the league, the FA Cup and international matches. The FA is offering £117m, raised from a planned £250m five-year deal with the BBC and ITV.

The Premier League is believed ready to make a counter offer to the Endsleigh League, arguing that by joining forces, the two leagues could extract a higher price from broadcasters.

At this juncture, it is unclear how good a deal the Premier League will extract from Sky. The league suggests a minimum of £500m for five years and hopes for £800m. Sky scoffs at such figures, but proffers none of its own publicly.

Born kicking: Charnelle Hutchinson and Dean Stockwell, both 11, at the launch in London of the schools' National Cup. Photograph: John Voos

Girls on target in football revolution



Record numbers of female players are fighting it out in a schools' competition

CLARE GARNER

Football's sexual revolution scored another goal yesterday with the launch of a tournament for English schools in which one in four participants will be girls.

A record 20,000 schoolchildren are expected to take part in the indoor five-a-side competition organised by the English Schools' Football Association and around 5,000 of them will be girls. No football tournament in the United Kingdom has ever attracted so many female players.

Of the 159 different schools' associations which have confirmed they will participate, 66 — including Newcastle upon Tyne, Sheffield, Liverpool, Birmingham, and Southampton — have also signed up for the girls' competition.

The National Cup, which will be sponsored by Wagon Wheels for the next three years, begins at a local level in November and culminates in a national final at Aston Villa Leisure Centre next April.

Charnelle Hutchinson, 11, who plays in goal for North Westminster Community School's under-12s, yesterday joined the Arsenal and England goalkeeper, David Seaman, and the England Ladies striker,

Mariannine Spacey, at Stamford Bridge, west London, to kick off the launch.

"Around 10 girls at school play football but I think this tournament will encourage more to play," said Charnelle, a keen Arsenal supporter. "It's good that they have separate sections for boys and girls. I prefer to play against girls because some of the boys are sexist and think: 'Oh, she must be weak, she's a girl.' Girls have more talent anyway."

Dean Stockwell, 11, from the same school as Charnelle, told a different story. While he agreed that the tournament would get more girls on to the pitch he was confident that boys would always be better at the sport. "I know girls who want to play all the time. They get on my nerves," he said. "I am not worried that girls will get better than us. I know they won't."

Miss Spacey, 29, welcomed the tournament as a way of eliminating prejudices at an early age. "We have had to put up with so many chauvinists over the years who say women shouldn't be playing because it's a man's game. I think it's going to be totally acceptable for girls to take part in this tournament because it is prestigious."

Lawyer admits stealing from clients' funds

JAMES CUSICK

A former solicitor who has so far cost the Law Society compensation fund an estimated £7m after it was discovered that he illegally used clients' money, yesterday admitted 10 charges of theft when he appeared at Maidstone Crown Court in Kent.

Graham Ford's guilty pleas covered responsibility for losses not less than £5m. Ford, 52, appeared alongside a former colleague, William Bew, 36, a solicitor who worked in the probate department of the large law firm which Ford headed. Mr Bew, of Cirencester, Gloucestershire, denied four charges involving the falsification of information relating to clients' accounts handled by Ford's firm. The law practice, which closed in 1992, once operated 10 offices in London and the South-east with a staff of 152.

Ford, now a declared bankrupt, of Battle in East Sussex, was struck off by the Law Society in 1993 following an internal investigation by the Solicitors' Complaints Bureau.

The theft occurred between 1989 and 1992. According to Tim Barnes QC, for the prosecution, Ford had "systematically stolen from clients' accounts" by issuing interim bills that were fictitious. Although the total amounts of the thefts itemised in the 10 charges totalled about £150,000, Ford's guilty pleas were regarded as specimens of the dishonesty he carried out between 1989 and 1992.

Mr Barnes told the court that Ford's overall responsibility was accepted to be a sum of not less than £5m and that the Law Society compensation fund had paid out £7m to cover the losses incurred by his firm. Most of the thefts related to probate work carried on by the firm. The sums described in the 10 counts ranged from only a few thousand pounds to £29,000 for one account.

In September this year, the Law Society issued a writ claiming £8.5m damages from accountants KPMG over its work for Ford's firm. The writ claims KPMG, which filed annual accounting reports on the firm, was "negligent and in breach of its duty of care by failing adequately to examine the account books and other records".

KPMG said it will be "contesting the writ vigorously".

Ford will be sentenced at the end of Mr Bew's trial, which continues today and is expected to last up to eight weeks.

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Public schools may start drug tests for pupils

JUDITH JUDD
Education Editor

Police should not automatically be called when pupils are found smoking cannabis, public school heads said yesterday. They also called on schools to consider drug tests for pupils suspected of taking drugs in a report drawn up for the Head Masters' Conference of top public school heads in Dublin.

Drugs are a growing problem in both state and independent schools. This year pupils have been expelled from schools such as Eton, Millfield, Wellington and Westminster for drugs offences.

Keith Dawson, head of Haberdashers' Aske's, Hertfordshire, who led the working party which produced the report, said an isolated incident with cannabis need not necessarily involve the police. "I am not saying don't bother about cannabis but it is a question of a pragmatic response."

Police were often busy with serious drug incidents and might take a less severe view of cannabis smoking than schools.

The report says police should be called to deal with pushers and dealers and if pupils are found taking class-A drugs such as heroin and ecstasy.

Schools are free to decide their own drugs policy and the

report tread a difficult path between heads' conflicting views on drug testing.

It poses random testing on moral and legal grounds and says: "Drug testing is not without its own problems both of principle and practice. Some day schools believe that to have drug testing in their schools would involve an unacceptable invasion of the private social activities of their pupils, which is essentially a matter for their parents."

However, it says pupils' agreement to testing could be used as an alternative to expulsion.

Richard Barker, head of Sevenoaks School, Kent, has already begun drug testing. He said a pupil was expelled in June for selling cannabis but time officers were allowed to remain on condition that they submitted to regular testing.

He said: "Drugs is a national problem. It is to the credit of independent schools that they are facing it."

Some schools expel all pupils involved in drug cases. But the report warns that this prevents heads making allowances for different degrees of guilt. "It may also encourage defeat and a closing of ranks." Expulsion, it says, should be used only as a last resort.

The working party argues that schools which expel pupils



Jungle fever: Sculptor David Hayes puts the finishing touches to a life-size Indian Elephant and Bengal Tiger. The work made from fake fur and glass fibre and entitled 'The Tiger Hunt' will form a centrepiece at the Royal Armouries in Leeds, which is due to open next Easter. Photograph: Kippa Matthews

Job stress 'forces head teachers to retire early'

FRAN ABRAMS
Education Correspondent

Head teachers' jobs are so stressful that fewer teachers are applying for promotion and the majority of heads are retiring early, according to a survey published yesterday.

A plan by Gillian Shephard, Secretary of State for Education and Employment, to train aspiring heads could simply deter even more potential applicants by showing them the grim realities of headship before they start, the report's author said last night.

The research showed small rural schools and those in the inner cities to be the worst affected. Many teachers have always been reluctant to work in urban areas, but problems in the countryside have escalated because of budget cuts. In these areas, heads now face a full teaching schedule plus administrative duties.

The questionnaire of 200 schools, commissioned by the National Association of Head Teachers from John Howson, of Oxford Brookes University, also showed that for the first time a majority of new ap-

pointments were women. But more men were still recruited in secondary schools, and the chances of a woman being appointed were far less if there were a large number of applicants.

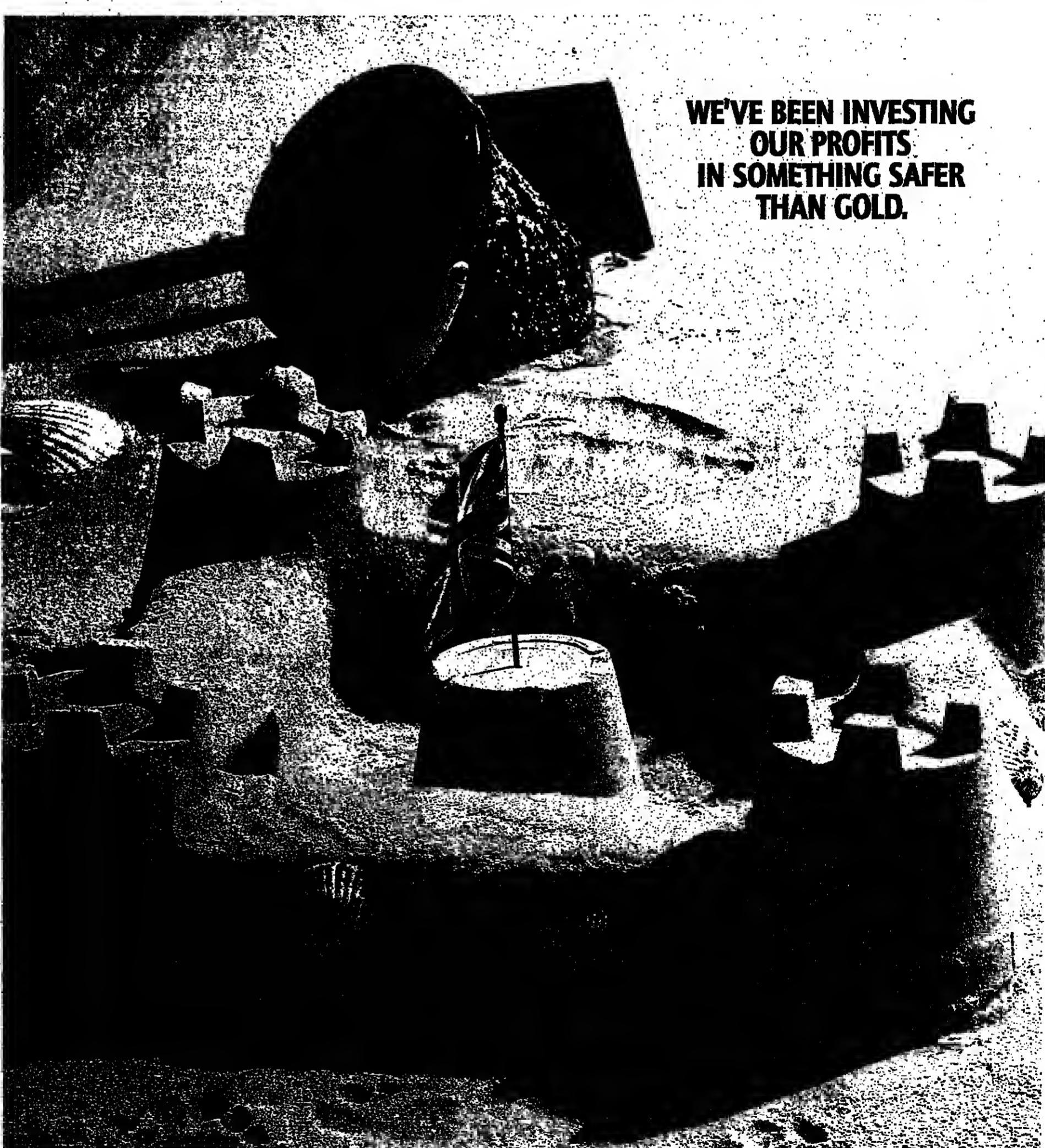
Mr Howson found that applications for primary headships had dropped by 20 per cent since 1988, and for deputy headships by 30 per cent. Thirty per cent of outgoing head teachers had retired early compared with just 24 per cent who had left at retirement age. A quarter of those who had retired had done so because of ill health or stress.

Difficulties in recruiting good quality head teachers were more severe in some areas than others, Mr Howson found. In inner London, more than one-third of posts had to be advertised in the first seven months of 1995 compared with less than a quarter last year. In Lancashire, which has a large number of small rural schools, the percentage had risen from 17 to 26 per cent in the same period. Head teachers' salaries ranged from less than £25,000 in one small school to more than £45,000 in a large secondary.

Mr Howson said teachers were being put off applying for promotion by budget cuts and redundancies as well as by the extra administrative duties imposed through local management.

He added: "People don't like being the bearers of bad news, and if they become head they know they may have to tell staff that they can't employ another teacher or that they have to cut a secretary. Whether Mrs Shephard's scheme will encourage people to come forward or discourage them is unclear."

David Hart, general secretary of the NATH, said qualifications would only attract the best potential heads if salary levels and administrative support in the job were also addressed.



Volunteers sought for breast cancer trials

The Cancer Research Campaign yesterday launched an appeal for 20,000 women to take part in "probably the most ambitious cancer trial ever undertaken", writes Liz Hunt.

Women with breast cancer are needed for a four-year study of the drug tamoxifen, a successful preventive treatment for the disease, which is believed to be responsible for the recent fall in the death rate. Up to half a million women in the United Kingdom already take the drug, but the new trial will focus on the benefits—or otherwise—of long-term treatment. Tamoxifen has been used since the mid-1960s, but was only confirmed as a useful preventative treat-

ment for breast cancer in 1990.

The trial is being funded by the United Kingdom Co-ordinating Committee for Cancer Research, comprising the CRC, Imperial Cancer Research Fund and the Medical Research Council. It will run in parallel with another tamoxifen trial which began recruiting volunteers earlier this year, and aims to see if the drug can prevent breast cancer in healthy women with a family history of the disease. This earlier trial ran into ethical problems because of the risks of giving healthy women such a potent hormonal drug. The MRC has twice refused to back it but is believed to be reconsidering its position.

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Police want law laid down in plain English

JASON BENNETT
Crime Correspondent

Police chiefs want much of the country's criminal law - some of which they believe is "legal gobbledegook" - to be rewritten into plain English. They believe that vague and confusingly written laws have led to wrong judgments and made the legal system inaccessible.

Chief constables are to press the Government to introduce changes to the wording of the laws, many of which are more than 100 years old, in England and Wales and introduce a new, single criminal code.

John Hoddinott, president of the Association of Chief Police Officers, said: "The law ought to be for citizens, it should be accessible and easy to understand. [For example] you can't understand the law on assaulting people even in half an hour. We are talking about punching people, cutting them or breaking their arm, but you would not understand that from reading the Offences Against the Person Act 1861. Even judges are not sure sometimes."

He added that it was a good

example of "legal gobbledegook". Under the Act the definition of wounding or causing grievous bodily harm with intent is "whosoever shall unlawfully and maliciously by any means whatsoever wound or cause any grievous bodily harm to any person with intent to do some

should be possible to agree plain English charges that are comprehensible to police officer, suspect, victim and citizen".

The recommendation to simplify legal language was one of a package of criminal justice measures that the association will be campaigning for in the coming year.

An agenda paper, *In Search of Criminal Justice*, published yesterday at its autumn conference in Coventry, also calls for greater use of video evidence in court, changes in the law to allow previous convictions and hearsay evidence to be admitted in court under certain circumstances, legislation on disclosure of evidence and binding pre-trial reviews, cutting down on the administrative work in courts and providing better treatment of victims and witnesses.

Civil rights lawyers are concerned about some of these proposed changes, particularly allowing the prosecution to disclose less evidence to the defence who will have to reveal more before the trial. They believe this will swing the legal system too far in favour of the police and prosecution.

Right to silence plea fails

HEATHER MILLS
Home Affairs Correspondent

Attempts by defence lawyers to limit the effects of new legislation that erodes the centuries-old "right to silence" were rejected by the Court of Appeal yesterday.

In a test case judgment that will be welcomed by the Government as support for its tough stance on law and order, Lord Taylor, the Lord Chief Justice, said he was not prepared to "drive a coach and horses" through the provisions of the 1994 Criminal Justice and Public Order Act.

Since the Act came into force earlier this year, defendants who choose not to answer po-

lice questions or give evidence in court can no longer rely on a once-enshrined right that no adverse inferences must be drawn from their silence. The legislation has been condemned by lawyers and human rights groups who claim it distorts the principle of "innocent until proven guilty" and who intend to challenge it through the European courts.

But that argument failed to convince the judges in the cases of three people convicted after they chose to remain silent. Lord Taylor rejected the argument that the burden of proof was watered down by obliging an accused person to testify if he wished to avoid conviction. The right to silence had not

been abolished, he said. No one could be forced to give evidence and no one could be convicted solely because of their silence.

The prosecution still had to establish a *prima facie* case, guilty still had to be proved beyond reasonable doubt, and inferences to be drawn from a defendant's silence were just one factor in the case. Further, a court could refuse to draw adverse inferences if the circumstances of the case justified it.

In two of the cases, however, the judges quashed the convictions because the trial judges, dealing with unfamiliar legislation, had failed to give adequate directions to the jury about what inferences they could draw from the defendants' silence.

Last night was the unveiling of the £25m marble, steel and



Premiere venue: The £25m theatre in Basel, Switzerland, built for Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber's "Phantom of the Opera" Photograph: Clive Barda

Ghostly triumph booked in for perpetuity

First Night: 'The Phantom of the Opera'; Musical Theater Messe, Basel

DAVID LISTER

Both the show and the business elements of showbusiness were played out here yesterday as Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber's artistic colonisation of Europe moved on to a new plane.

Indeed, the plane was one of the more remarkable elements. A Crossair Saab 2000 aeroplane had its fuselage painted with the *Phantom of the Opera* logo and mask, towering the Swiss flag. As it took off from Heathrow yesterday, the climax to the title track played through the cabin. The official carrier for

In two of the cases, however, the judges quashed the convictions because the trial judges, dealing with unfamiliar legislation, had failed to give adequate directions to the jury about what inferences they could draw from the defendants' silence.

Last night was the unveiling of the £25m marble, steel and

glass 1500-seat theatre that Basle businessmen and city fathers built solely to hand to Sir Andrew's Really Useful Group to boost the economy of the city. Sir Andrew's team will run the theatre and probably stage the *Phantom of the Opera* in perpetuity. Should that show ever close, he has an "on-going programming option" to replace it.

But it won't be closing for a while. Before last night's Swiss premiere, his staff said they had sold £10m of advance tickets. And they didn't even have to pay for the £150,000 banquet after the show. Basle's grateful businessmen coughed up.

The show part of showbusiness began earlier with a press conference in the city hall where the composer faced a bewilderment mixture of lavish tributes and hostile questions.



Sir Andrew: "Phantom" story was 'load of hokum'

by the most distinguished visit from the United Kingdom since Her Majesty the Queen was greeted here 15 years ago ... Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber is the man who inspires, promotes and enlivens with his genius again and again."

He tried to deter questions about profits from the show - which go to the Really Useful Group - saying he was merely a shareholder in the group. The holding was 70 per cent.

And he told how *Phantom* began. He bought a book of it for 50 cents at a New York bookstall, thought the story "a load of hokum" and handed it to the director, Hal Prince, who wanted to direct a romantic musical. Who they did collaborate on it, Sir Andrew said yesterday. "There was a lot of love in it for me. I wrote the role of Christine for my then wife Sarah Brightman and a lot of passion went into it."

The show, performed in German with Hal Prince again directing, looked and sounded splendid. In December Sir Andrew takes over a new theatre in Frankfurt purpose-built for his *Sunset Boulevard*. Britain's passionate one-man export drive rolls on.

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Fighting mars start of Bosnia ceasefire

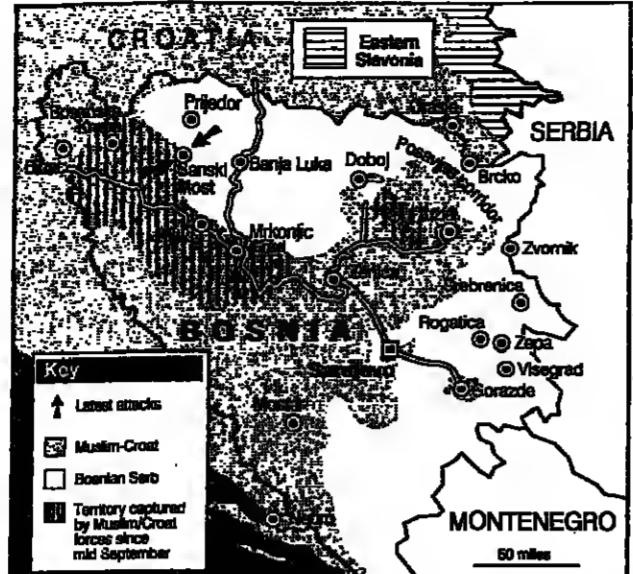
CHRISTOPHER BELLAMY
Defence Correspondent

All was quiet on most of the 600 miles of Bosnian battle front yesterday after three-and-a-half years of fighting. But the ceasefire, which came into force at one minute past midnight, was ignored in Sanski Most, which the Bosnian government's Fifth Corps claimed to have captured on Tuesday, and where serious fighting was still reported last night.

Sanski Most marks the high tide of the Muslim advance towards the key Serb-held city of Banja Luka, and it is not surprising that the struggle has continued, although street fighting is unusual in Bosnia. "There is definitely no ceasefire there," one witness reported after returning to the government-held town of Bihać.

The government in Sarajevo accused the Serbs of making a further push, and President Alija Izetbegovic warned that the continued fighting threatened the ceasefire, saying: "We will have to respond to [the attack] if it does not stop." He added, however, that he was still optimistic peace would be achieved.

A few other ceasefire violations were reported, but the UN considered them insignificant. Although everyone who knows the Bosnian conflict was cautious yesterday, there was



optimism that the ceasefire, which had been delayed 48 hours, would hold. "Something tells me this one could last," said the French Foreign Minister, Hervé de Charette.

Reported violations were mostly in the north-east, around Tuzla and the Posavina corridor, which links the two main Serb-held areas, and around Sarajevo. A UN convoy heading from Sarajevo to the Muslim enclave of Gorazde was halted by mines and had to turn back.

Normally there are about 500 firing incidents a day, with perhaps 300 involving heavy weapons. Yesterday the UN reported fewer than 20. "It's definitely holding," a UN spokesman in Zagreb said. "It's far better than I anticipated, expected, hoped." Lieutenant Colonel Chris Vernon, a UN spokesman in Sarajevo, said it was militarily impossible to halt entirely the fighting after a few hours' notice which local commanders had received.

The five nation contact group – the US, Russia, Britain, France and Germany – is due to meet in Moscow next Tuesday. Full peace talks between the warring factions are due to begin in the US around the end of the month, but the Bosnian government warned it would boycott them unless other conditions were met. These included opening up the road to the Gorazde enclave, and opening a road out of Sarajevo.



Pawns' game: Bosnian Serbs mark the ceasefire by playing chess. Photograph: Reuter

Austrian coalition fails to last year

ADRIAN BRIDGE
Central Europe Correspondent

After less than one year in office, Austria's ruling coalition split apart yesterday plunging the country into an early general election which could transform its political landscape.

The split between the governing Socialists (SPO) and People's (OVP) parties followed the collapse of attempts to bridge their differences over how to reduce a spiralling budget deficit. The SPO wanted most of a Sch50bn (£3.8bn) reduction to be achieved through higher taxes. The more conservative OVP wanted cuts in Austria's generous welfare payments and state subsidies.

According to Wolfgang Schüssel, the OVP leader, the dispute reflected a "fundamental battle over [the] direction" of the country. Chancellor Franz Vranitzky, the SPO leader, believed the differences were reconcilable and accused his OVP counterpart of a "flight from responsibility" by precipitating fresh elections, due on 17 December.

Certainly much of the pressure for yesterday's move came from the ambitious Mr Schüssel, who only took over the leadership of his party in April. With the OVP rising high in the opinion polls, he undoubtedly sees a chance for his party to overtake the SPO as the country's dominant political force and for himself to replace Mr Vranitzky as chancellor.

But Mr Schüssel's gamble could backfire and lead to a further surge of support for Jörg Haider, the populist leader of the far-right Freedom Party (FPO), whose declared aim is to smash the post-war grip on power enjoyed by Austria's two main parties.

"The collapse of the coalition after less than one year is a clear signal that the system has ceased to work satisfactorily," said Klaus Paupel, a professor of political science at Salzburg university. "Many traditional supporters of the mainstream parties may look elsewhere; it could well play into Haider's hands."

The SPO and OVP have ruled Austria either singly or together, since the Second World War. In addition to political power, they have devised an elaborate system of patronage – dividing jobs and even flats along party lines. Over the past 10 years both parties have seen a steady erosion of their support as a disenchanted electorate has turned increasingly to the populist, xenophobic Mr Haider or, on the left, to the Green party.

In last October's general election the SPO's share of the vote sank to just 35 per cent while the OVP scored 28 per cent. Mr Haider, who took over as leader of the FPO in 1986 when it was standing at about 5 per cent, celebrated another triumph: a record 23 per cent.

Bomber's motives 'unclear'

TONY BARBER
Europe Editor

Ten days after President Kiro Gligorov of Macedonia was almost killed by a car bomb in Skopje, government officials and police investigators are uncertain if the assassination attempt was related to Balkan politics or organised crime. No group or individual has claimed responsibility, no arrests have been made, and all the Macedonian authorities are saying that the attack bore the marks of a professional killer or hit squad from abroad.

"The way the assassination attempt was carried out points to an international terrorist organisation, but for the moment we are not announcing anything," the deputy interior minister, Dime Gjurov, said on Tuesday.

However, the authorities have released a description of the man who bought the Citroën that exploded in Skopje on 3 October, causing serious eye and head injuries to Mr Gligorov, 78, and killing his driver as they passed by in the president's car. He is said to be blond, 5ft 7ins tall, and aged about 30.

This man bought the Citroën in Skopje on 24 September for 650 German marks (£290), according to the newspaper *Nova Makedonija*. It said he spoke a Serbo-Croat dialect common to a region of northern Croatia.

Immediately after the attack, some Balkan experts pointed the finger of guilt at Macedonian nationalists opposed to Mr Gligorov's recent concessions to Greece on the flag and constitution of his young state. Mr Gligorov had further annoyed the nationalist opposition by seeking better relations with Serbia.

The main group opposed to Mr Gligorov's policies has been the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation (VMRO), a party with a rich tradition of political violence earlier in this century. However, VMRO's leadership has vigorously denied involvement.

Some argue the world-beating killers are more likely to be connected with gangs involved in the burgeoning drug trade and money-laundering in Macedonia.

Italian minister hounds judges

ANDREW GUMBLE
Rome

The French anti-corruption magistrate Renaud van Ruymbeke once admitted that his ambition was to nail a government minister; conversely, it seems that the lifetime ambition of the Italian minister, Filippo Mancuso, is to nail an anti-corruption magistrate.

Ever since Mr Mancuso, a career jurist and former appeals court prosecutor, was appointed Justice Minister last January, he has been single-minded in his attempts to discredit the "clean hands" magistrates in Milan, whose investigations led to the collapse of the old political order two years ago.

Mr Mancuso, 74, belongs to the old school of magistrates who never challenged the system and never dared turn themselves into public personalities. He seems to be waging a vendetta against the new generation of judicial movers and shakers, bent on revolutionising Italian society.

Mr Mancuso went into even higher gear this week, opening new investigations into two of the Milan magistrates, Gherardo Colombo and Paolo Ielo.

He has refused to resign, despite several no-confidence motions proposed by parliament.

Soon after his appointment, Mr Mancuso sent ministry inspectors to Milan to investigate whether the Milan magistrates had abused their office in their attempts to indict the former prime minister, Silvio Berlusconi. This caused a furore; when Mr Berlusconi's own justice minister, Alfredo Biondi, tried to do the same thing in July 1994, he was forced to backtrack.

Mr Mancuso's inspectors failed to turn up any dirt, so he fired them (later reinstating all but two under pressure from colleagues and public opinion). That was not the end of the story. Feeling abandoned by his Prime Minister, Lamberto Dini, he described Mr Dini as "servile" to the political forces supporting his government.

Under Italy's constitution, the only way to get rid of an irritating minister is for the whole government to resign. Mr Dini plans to do just that when his temporary mandate runs out in the next few weeks. Mr Mancuso has only one friend left in the world, Mr Berlusconi, who has his own reasons to dislike the Milan magistrates.

Papandreou under fire

DINA KYRIAKOU
Reuters

Athens — The Greek Prime Minister, Andreas Papandreou who founded the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (Pasok) 20 years ago and has ruled it with an iron fist ever since, faced renewed calls yesterday for his resignation.

The main group opposed to Mr Papandreou's policies has been the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation (VMRO), a party with a rich tradition of political violence earlier in this century. However, VMRO's leadership has vigorously denied involvement.

Some argue the world-beating killers are more likely to be connected with gangs involved in the burgeoning drug trade and money-laundering in Macedonia.

Mr Papandreou's speech to the Pasok central committee on Wednesday blamed rebels for hurting the government's image as opinion polls showed the party's popularity sliding. "A small clique of high-level party members is becoming a circle of self-destruction ... Cowardice and ingratitude will no longer be tolerated," he said.

He dared rebels to set up their own party and take their case to the electorate, but did not expel them from Pasok, as he has done with dissenters in the past. "The picture was sad. The once-indisputable leader just read a prepared speech and left," said the liberal daily newspaper *Eleftherotypia*.

The dissenters, rallying around prominent members known as the "Gang of Four", accuse Mr Papandreou of losing touch with reality and letting his "court" rule the country.

Criticism has focused on his wife, Dimitra Liana, 40, who was appointed in 1993 as his chief-of-staff, giving her power over his daily agenda and his office.

Among those concerned about the party's future and eager to fill Mr Papandreou's shoes are an ex-industry minister, Costas Simitis, a former European Commissioner, Vassos Papandreou, and a former European affairs minister, Theodoros Pangalos. They have openly called on him to take on a less prominent role and open the door to his succession.

Mr Papandreou, who staged a political comeback when he returned to office in 1993, said he had no intention of being a figurehead prime minister, and vowed to use the two remaining years of his term to push his programme through. But Mr Simitis said: "Papandreou has chosen to deny reality."

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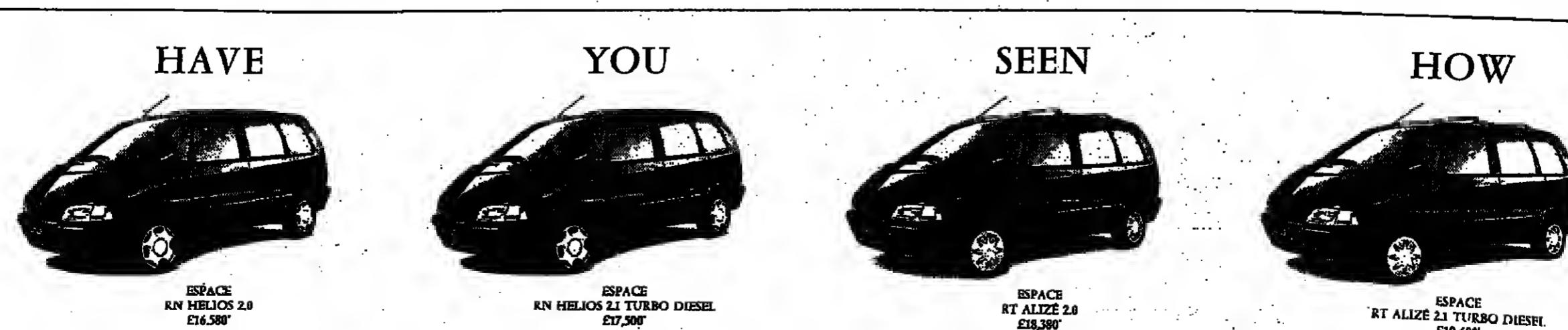
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international

Ukraine near deal to close Chernobyl

Kiev has lowered the price the West must pay to shut down its deadly reactor, reports **Phil Reeves**

Moscow — After weeks of wrangling over money, the Ukraine and the West last night were inching towards an agreement over the terms by which Chernobyl, scene of the worst nuclear accident in history, will finally be shut down by the end of the decade.

Following talks with officials from the Group of Seven industrialised countries, the Ukrainians indicated they had relaxed a demand for \$4bn (£2.53bn) as a condition for closing Chernobyl's two remaining reactors, although they made clear that they still expected a large sum in Western aid.

If the talks finally produce a settlement, there will be widespread relief among governments across Europe, although it will do nothing to ease the anxiety about the hazards posed by the entire nuclear sector in Russia and its former satellites — concerns ranging from theft of components for weapons, to the risk of a radiation leak from ill-supervised, under-funded and decrepit installations.

This week the environmental group, Greenpeace, launched a scathing attack on

Russia's lack of safety standards, distributing government documents which showed that last year Gosatomnadzor, the nation's nuclear safety inspectorate, found 38,599 safety violations at nuclear sites, but only took legal action in 13 cases. The inspectorate had also conducted safety tests on more than 17,500 nuclear-related workers; almost 1,300 failed.

These statistics add weight to the alarming findings of the "Most Dangerous Reactors" project, a group of experts convened by the US Department of Energy to alert policy-makers about the dangers of foreign nuclear power plants. In a recent report, following a review of nine Soviet-designed reactors, they described a catalogue of problems including deficiencies in design, weak and incompetent regulatory bodies, and under-funding.

The American researchers provisionally named the four most dangerous plants as Chernobyl, Kozloduy in Bulgaria, Kola in north-western Russia and Ignalina in Lithuania. Using a complex formula to assess the likelihood of an accident, all

four plants received a "D" grade on a scale from A (representing low risk) to F (high risk). Extracts from their conclusions make sobering reading.

■ Ignalina, Lithuania: "Conditions that are deemed so important in the West for preventing accidents — like a conservative 'forgiving' plant design, adequate funds and strong regulatory oversight — are simply absent at Ignalina," says the report.

The nuclear power station, which provides 80 per cent of the ex-Soviet republic's electricity, became the responsibility of Lithuania's nuclear safety inspectorate, Vatesi, when it declared independence in 1991. Vatesi is years away from becoming a recognised authority with a strong scientific base," it says.

The report's authors were scathing about the plant's general safety systems and shoddy construction, but express even greater concern over the risk of the reactor cavity being over pressurised. This "could result in an uncooled core being directly exposed to the atmosphere with no barriers to prevent the release of ra-

dioisotopes, as was so aptly shown at Chernobyl.

A major radiation release could affect the health of tens of thousands of people in the region, with secondary fall-out occurring in any number of nearby countries, like Poland, Latvia, Russia or Sweden." Like Chernobyl, the plant uses boiling-water, pressure-tube RBMK reactors — the kind "generally considered the least safe by

Western safety experts". Some 200,000 people live within a 30-mile radius of Ignalina.

■ Kozloduy, northern Bulgaria: Operating this power plant on the Romanian border is a "truly high stakes gamble". The report cites serious design faults, a dangerously undersized emergency core-cooling system, inadequate containment and "a legacy of poor safety culture".

When international inspectors ordered its first generation water-cooled reactors to be shut down four years ago, the Bulgarians obeyed. But they restored them a year later, "without correcting a number of design deficiencies". One of its reactors is currently closed for safety checks, but another was recently restarted by the Bulgarian government, which claims that it cannot do without

the power as the winter approaches. Some 150,000 people live within a 30-mile radius of Kola, north-western Russia: Kola is the primary cause of a threefold increase in the number of incidents at Russia's old Soviet-style VVER-440 reactors in recent years, says the report. About once a year, Kola has a near-accident. "Poor employee morale is increasing chances of human error and sabotage."

Spacemen trapped by rocketing prices

PHIL REEVES
Moscow

It will be one of those awkward long-distance telephone phone calls that requires a certain degree of managerial skill: "Look, we know you will have been up there, orbiting around the earth on your own for four months. But you know what the budget's like. You are just going to have to stay there for a bit."

The Russian controllers of the Mir Space station have yet to inform their three cosmonauts that they may well have to spend another 39 days floating around in space, allegedly because of difficulty over

Officials said yesterday that funding problems have delayed the construction of a booster rocket which would have carried a replacement crew to the station, allowing Thomas Reiter, a German, and Russians Yuri Gidzenko and Alexander Avdeyev to return to earth after 130 days.

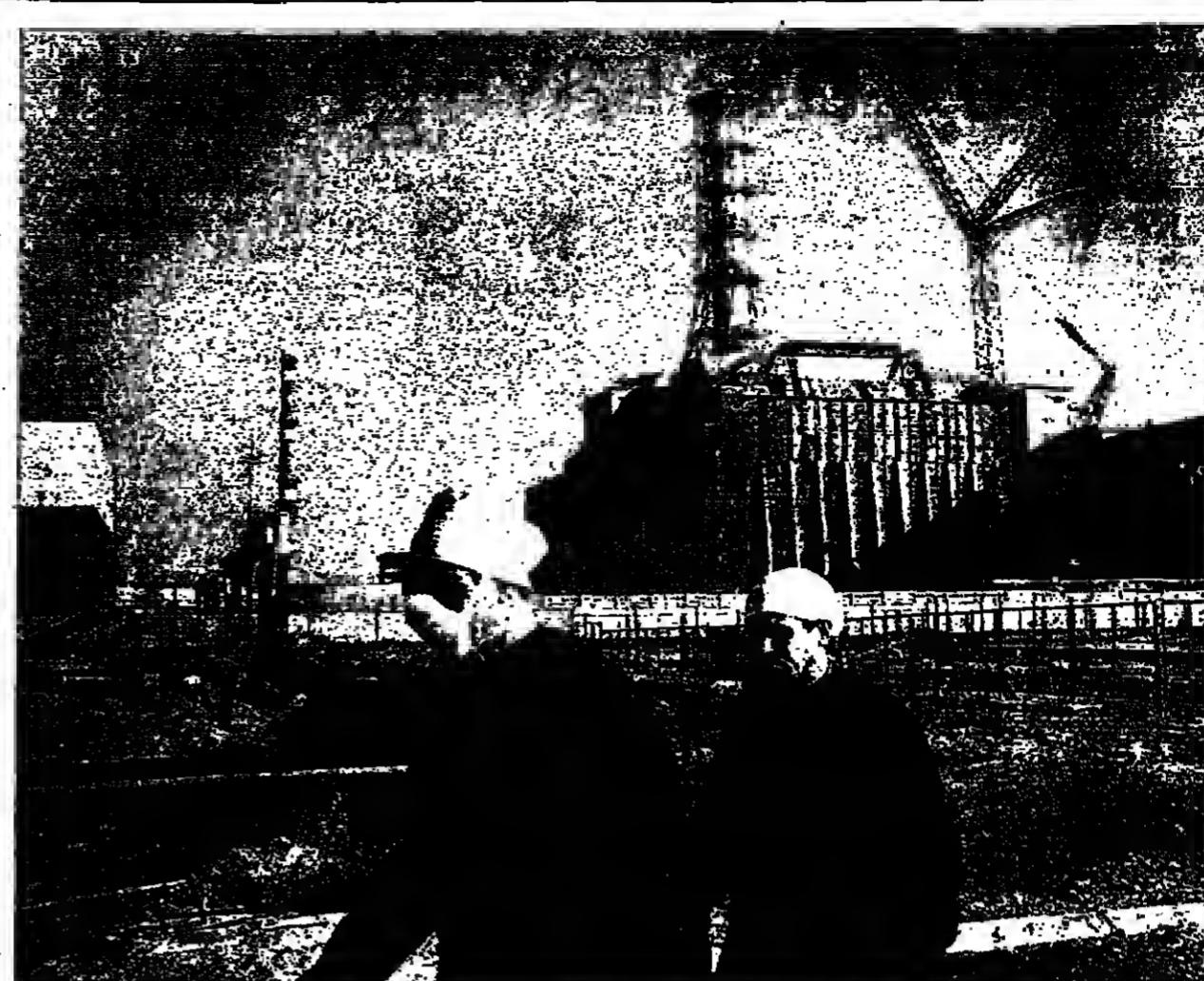
So, plans are under discussion to extend the mission of the men — up there since the beginning of September — by more than six weeks. It is unclear how the crew will take it, but the Russian Space Agency yesterday was looking on the bright side.

"They will have enough food, water and air, since the Progress cargo ship that docked with the Mir (on Wednesday) brought more than enough supplies," said Anatoly Tkachev, after explaining that the construction of a Progress booster for the Soyuz-22 spacecraft is taking longer than planned because the production plant lacks funding.

"We are going to tell them quite soon, and I am sure they will be pleased about it — all cosmonauts, like pilots, like to fly," he said. "They are all in good physical shape, especially Reiter, and they'll have time for more research."

The new Soyuz rocket, which will put up a Soyuz TM-23 capsule carrying relief cosmonauts, Yuri Onufriyenko and Yuri Usachev, will now not be ready until 21 February.

The mission, part of the international effort Europe '95, consists of biological, geophysical and technological experiments. Mr Reiter is going to take a spacewalk on 20 October 20, to install equipment outside the Mir. He will have time, by the sounds of it, for quite a long and leisurely stroll.



After the event: The Chernobyl disaster turned out to be the worst nuclear accident in history

IN BRIEF

Graf's 'special tax deal' to be probed

Bonn — German politicians decided to launch a special inquiry into allegations that the tennis star Steffi Graf was given too much special treatment by her regional tax authorities. The parliament of Baden-Württemberg state, where Graf's tax affairs are being investigated, voted for the investigation.

Graf's father, Peter, was jailed in August to prevent him fleeing or concealing evidence to support accusations that he and his daughter evaded millions of marks in tax. The Grabs say they struck a deal with the state's tax authorities in 1993, agreeing on their tax liability.

Chirac visits dead bomb suspect's home

Vaulx-en-Velin, France — President Jacques Chirac held talks in the home town of Khaled Kelkal, an Algerian-born suspect in a string of bombings who was shot dead by police. Mr Chirac met community leaders and activists. Kelkal was gunned down by paramilitary gendarmes as he tried to escape a police dragnet two weeks ago.

Russians drop case against puppet show

Moscow — Russian legal authorities said they had halted criminal proceedings against the satirical "Kukly" puppet show. The acting Prosecutor-General Oleg Gaydanov said the case initiated by his predecessor, Aleksandr Ilyushenko, who was sacked on Sunday, had been dropped but gave no details. In a case launched last July, "Kukly" was accused of denigrating President Boris Yeltsin and senior government officials.

False prophet?

London — Husain Rashid Hassan (left), said to be a former confidant of President Saddam Hussein, surfaced in London, wearing a false beard and moustache, and urged Iraqis to rise against their leader. But Mr Hassan, refused to reveal basic details about his recent history, thus making it difficult to verify any of his claims.



French fishermen fire on Spanish trawler

Paris — French fishermen fired on a Spanish trawler they claimed was trying to destroy their drift nets, wounding two Spanish crew members. The incident, reminiscent of last year's "fishing wars", took place on Wednesday in the Gulf of Gascony. The clash between the crews of the Spanish *Manuel Hernández* and the French *Croix Hore* occurred as both vessels were fishing for white tuna. "It's not a war, but there is a group of guys making life impossible for us," one Spaniard said.

Earthquake shakes Mexican capital

Mexico City — An earthquake measuring 6.1 on the open-ended Richter scale shook Mexico City, but there were no immediate reports of death or damage. The National University's earthquake centre said the tremor's epicentre was in western Mexico.

Iraqi cover-up for 'criminal' George Bush

Baghdad — A mosaic portrait of George Bush has been covered with a carpet, protecting it from people checking into Baghdad's Al-Rashid Hotel. Three days before a referendum confirming Saddam Hussein's position as president of Iraq, workers covered the portrait of the former US president, which is captioned "George Bush is a Criminal". It has graced the hotel's threshold since soon after a stray cruise missile hit the hotel in 1993.

Turkey puts Reuters journalist on trial

HUGH POPE
Istanbul

Turkey's security apparatus has finally targeted a foreign correspondent for the first time yesterday, putting an American reporter for Reuters news agency in the dock for broadcasting one of the country's many laws limiting freedom of expression.

A mixture of official politeness, the threat of a three-year jail sentence and trays of black tea in between times made the opening day of the trial a very Turkish affair. "Now, my girl," was the first question from the chief judge on the bench of the State Security Court, "how old

are you?" As he and everybody else in court knew, Alize Marcus is a 33-year-old from New Jersey living in Istanbul. What nobody understands is what Turkey hopes to gain from launching a political trial against her and by extension her London-based employers.

Ms Marcus is charged with "inciting racial hatred" in a report last November about the burning and forcible evacuation of Kurdish villages. Its content differed little from Turkish and international reports on the widespread clearances, aimed at cutting Kurdish guerrillas off from food and recruits. But the Turkish nationalist old guard struck back, choosing a differ-

ent punishment from Turkey's occasional expulsions of "hostile" reporters. "She was asking for it, she wanted to be a hero. Well, she got her trial," said one senior Turkish official.

Given that Turkey's President Suleyman Demirel is due to visit Washington next week, and that the European Parliament may hold up a vital customs union deal until it sees better Turkish human rights, most observers had assumed that the case would be quietly dropped.

But the judges deliberately missed an obvious chance. According to Turkish press law, charges must be laid within six months. Ms Marcus wrote the article 11 months ago, but was

only charged eight months later, in July. This defence argument was rejected on a dubious technicality. "Such technical matters mean nothing. This is a political trial, like most trials in the state security courts," said a senior figure in Turkey's New Democracy Party.

Ms Marcus can be grateful that she is not being held in detention, as are more than 170 Turks convicted for what they have written or said. Although she pulled no punches in her reporting on the 11-year-old Kurdish war, Turkey's real target may be Reuters itself.

Two Turkish newspapers have in recent months taken the unusual step of criticising what

they saw as anti-Turkish bias in the agency, the world's principal source of news about the country. The Turks know their booming economy is a big profit centre for Reuters, whose main business is supplying financial news, not reports on Kurds.

Reuters is publicly backing Ms Marcus, who told the court that while she dictated the basic information in the story issued under her name, the final report was a joint effort by Reuters bureaux in Ankara, Istanbul and London. The judges have in turn demanded that Reuters identify who really wrote the story before the next court hearing on 9 November.

Chirac overhauls missile arsenal

CHRISTOPHER BELLAMY
Defence Correspondent

France has decided to proceed with a long-range, air-launched cruise missile with a nuclear warhead, and to scrap missiles based in ageing silos in southeast France, according to reliable sources in Paris.

The French Defence Ministry and President Jacques Chirac's office yesterday said no final decision had been made but indicated it was imminent.

The authoritative defence newsletter ITU (*It's, It's Us*) said President Chirac had accepted recommendations from government defence experts to proceed with the new missile and close down silos in the Plateau d'Albion. Instead,

Rafale fighter bombers to hit targets from up to 900km, enabling them to stay out of range of most anti-aircraft defences. A joint Anglo-French ASLE was one option considered by the British Ministry of Defence to meet its requirement for a Tactical Air-to-Surface Missile, or TASM, to replace its free-fall WE-177 nuclear bombs until the idea was scrapped in 1993.

Instead, the British have decided to concentrate on one nuclear system, the submarine-launched Trident missile. From about 2006, Trident will provide Britain's only nuclear deterrent.

The 18 French missiles in the Plateau d'Albion are SS-23s, introduced in 1980, with a range of 3,500km. They are housed in ageing silos which look increasingly vulnerable in view of the growing threat from missiles fired from North Africa.

Britain and France, the only Western European nuclear powers, exchange information on nuclear strategy but have not yet co-operated on nuclear warhead design. Following the resumption of French nuclear tests in the South Pacific there have been allegations that Britain has received data from the French tests, but the Foreign Office yesterday said no direct data had been received and none had been read.



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international

Scarred by the savage lash of Islamic justice

In Saudi Arabia, the girls are held down by a policewoman while they are whipped by a man. In the United Arab Emirates, they are ordered to lie on a bench to be flogged, though sometimes their heads are shackled above their heads.

As an Asian diplomat put it apologetically: "They must be restrained in case they run amok during the beatings." For supposed immoral behaviour or for theft, a Filipina, Sri Lankan or Indian maid in the Arab Gulf can expect up to 200 lashes with a bamboo cane no thicker than a man's small finger – administered by a man, of course.

Islamic "justice" had condemned hundreds of young women to be flogged in the Gulf in the past three years – well over 2,000, according to two Asian embassies who have vainly tried to protect their female

nationals – before deporting them home, penniless and in disgrace. A chance meeting with a boyfriend, an innocent friendship or a serious love affair, all have provoked the wrath of five-man Sharia courts.

The cruelty of the whipping of women is carefully documented throughout the Gulf where, at least in the smaller emirates, newspapers carry daily reports of the flogging of young women who are often the victims of rape at the hands of their employers.

Many of the Islamic court judges who order the whippings are Saudis who have been given *sharia* court posts outside the kingdom. One Western medical worker who was herself imprisoned on fraudulent charges of "attempted seduction" has reported that several women in Saudi prisons "allege

that on being arrested by police or *muzza* [religious police], they are sexually molested".

The savage prison flogging of young women is routine in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf nations. Take the case of the small Arab emirate of Sharjah. On 23 March this year, an Islamic court there ordered two women to receive 180 lashes for alleged adultery. On 2 April, an Asian housemaid was condemned by the Sharjah court to 140 lashes and a year in prison for an alleged extra-marital relationship. Two days later, the same court ordered two married Asian women to receive 180 lashes for alleged adultery.

Last month alone saw another spate of lashings. On 6 September, a 24-year-old woman was sentenced to 90 lashes of the cane for alleged adultery. The Philippines embassy tried to save Josephine Vergara from her punishment, but was ignored. "We went to see her and



Robert Fisk, Middle East Correspondent, concludes his series on the cruel and brutal treatment of women in the Arab Gulf states

Asian maid was ordered to be whipped 180 times for "indulging in sex outside marriage". Another maid was ordered to be flogged 140 times for "adultery" on 18 September.

Six days later, the Sharjah court ordered a 24-year-old Filipina maid to receive 180 strokes of the cane for adultery with a male Indian friend. The Philippines embassy tried to save Josephine Vergara from her punishment, but was ignored. "We went to see her and

she was, well, not happy about it," an official from the embassy said. "We tried to see what we could do, but the wheels of justice had turned."

"Justice" in the United Arab Emirates is always administered by a man who leans over the girl to cane her in the presence of both male and female prison officers and – sometimes, though not always – a doctor. "The man who lashes the girl has to hold a Koran under his right arm as he beats her.

This is to reduce the pain he can inflict because he cannot move his upper arm, for fear he will drop the Koran in the dust," an Asian who has been present at the flogging of a girl told the *Independent*. "But of course, it can still be very, very painful. If the girl screams too much, and seems in too much pain, they will administer the punishment in instalments – 40 lashes now, 40 in a week's time and so on."

Arab courts insist that the lashings are the only way of ensuring that local "morality" is upheld – though the number of court-ordered floggings suggests the opposite. Islamic judges also claim that the women are not permanently scarred, even though this is clearly untrue. In the words of a Canadian nurse who worked in the largest hospital in Riyadh: "The

lashings are brutal and excruciatingly painful, they [the women] will bear the scars physically and psychologically for a long time."

Asian girls who become pregnant are almost inevitably doomed to be flogged. "If they think they are pregnant, they go to a local hospital – and if they are pregnant, the hospital will always ask them for their marriage certificate," another Asian diplomat said. "If the girls are not married, the hospital is bound by law to tell the police, and the girls are arrested. From there, they go straight to the courts and are lashed. And then they are deported."

Among women subjected to the lash in the Saudi prison of Malaz in 1993 was an Indonesian maid who, according to a fellow prisoner, "had been starved and tortured for two

years. Her mistress had placed hot irons on her arms and had beaten her on the head with high-heeled shoes, penetrating her scalp."

The same witness, whose testimony has been made available to the *Independent*, recorded that "many of the prisoners were domestic helpers who had been raped or otherwise abused by their employers. If they attempted to run away or became pregnant, they were jailed and sometimes flogged".

An Asian diplomat at first refused to discuss the condition of maids who came to his embassy after being whipped. "It is very difficult for me," he said. "The Saudis don't want us to talk about this. But I must tell you that there is blood and there are scars. The way these girls are treated is simple cruelty; you could perhaps call it sadism."

Chinese 'broke promise to sink the CD pirates'

TERESA POOLE
Peking

All but one of China's CD factories are again churning out pirated discs, seven months after Peking pledged to crack down on intellectual property rights abuse.

Representatives of the United States music, film, and computer software industries said yesterday that China had reneged on an agreement with Washington to shut pirate disc manufacturers and open its market to overseas companies.

Eric Smith, president of the US-based International Intellectual Property Alliance, said that after the Sino-US piracy pact was agreed in February, illicit production in China briefly declined. But by mid-summer at least 27 plants were again making pirated CDs, CD videos, CD-Roms, and laser discs at a rate of 45 million a year.

"Everybody knows where they are. Everybody knows who owns them," Mr Smith said in Peking. Paul Ewing of Warner Music added: "The situation is almost back to where it was last year." The only marked difference has been a shift in output from cheap music CDs to higher-value CD-Roms, costing the copyright owners even more in lost sales.



Note of welcome: Chinese musicians relax before playing at the Foster's brewery commissioning ceremony in Tianjin yesterday – a far cry from the strained Sino-US relations over pirated American CDs. Photograph: AFP

Clifford Borg-Marks, of the Business Software Alliance, said a CD-Rom containing 200 pieces of software with a legal retail price of \$25,000 (£16,000) had been bought on the streets of Shenzhen, in southern China, for 40 yuan (£2). Microsoft's Windows 95 was on sale with "a couple of days", he said, and had even been found in a Cyrillic version being smuggled from China into Russia. The delegation showed off a

selection of Chinese-manufactured discs purchased in Hong Kong, including an Adobe desktop publishing programme which should retail for \$1,500, but sold for \$8. However, only one Chinese wholesaler had been prosecuted since February, the delegation said.

Mr Smith said US manufacturers were well aware of the

links between pirate factory owners and local governments. Raids and seizures from retailers had increased, but the fines and penalties were too low to act as a deterrent. Robin Rolfe, executive director of the International Trademark Association, said the fines were little more than a "small business tax on profits" for the pirates.

An estimated 98 per cent of computer software in use in China is pirated. Under the Sino-US pact, government ministries were supposed to start purchasing legitimate software, but there has been no significant increase in sales. Chinese officials had been "fairly ambiguous" this week on improved market access for foreign firms, videos,

'Gratitude' cash costs Japan's royals dear

RICHARD LLOYD PARRY
Tokyo

The brick of banknotes was nine inches thick, delicately wrapped in the finest hand-made paper. Bowing deeply and with profuse expressions of thanks, the small-town politician presented it to the frowning retainer. Once the business was completed, he was led to the back of the big house for an audience with the real recipient of the cash – his town's patron, Mr Big himself.

The scene, described by the mayor of a small city in central Japan, is familiar from a hundred Japanese movies. But in this case there was a difference. For this Mr Big was not a gang chief or corrupt politician trading favours for cash, but the late Prince Takamatsu, a member of the imperial family and an uncle of the Emperor. The contents of the mayor's parcel, and his annual visits to the prince's Tokyo residence, have publicly embarrassed Japan's reclusive imperial family.

The scandal has innocent origins. Every year, Otsu, a humble lakeside city near Kyoto, holds a bicycle race, the Takamatsu Cup. The prince, a keen sportsman who died of cancer in 1987, attended regularly as a young man. The six-day race brings crowds of visitors to Otsu, and 32bn yen (£200m) in bets. But the bookies have not been the only beneficiaries. Since 1950, Otsu has been paying the Takamatsu family large sums of money simply for the use of its name. In 1978 the "gratitude money" amounted to 500,000 yen (£3,150 at today's rates). But last year, the prince's widow received 10m yen (£63,000). "We wanted to give a respectable gift," the embarrassed mayor explained, "the kind of sum that wouldn't appear disconcerting". Records for the first 20 years of the race are lost, but since 1971 the city's courtesy to the Takamatsu family has amounted to 122m yen (£766,000).

The arrangement, unknown to all but a few city officials, was uncovered by a Communist member of Otsu council, and the scandal quickly spread. Potentially, this was more than an embarrassment. Apart from the steady details about wads of bank notes and the secret handovers, the affair raised serious legal questions. Article 8 of Japan's constitution states: "No property can be given to, or received by, the Imperial House", and the Imperial House Economy Law requires permission from the Diet for gifts of more than 1.6m yen (£10,000). The prince's family clearly had broken the law.

Within a week, another gratitude scam had been uncovered, involving the Emperor's cousin, Prince Tomohito, who betted 22m yen from a cycle race in another city. Last week, after an investigation by the Imperial Household Agency, the ministry which oversees royal affairs, the matter was brought to a hasty conclusion. Both city councils received cheques recouping their donations.

"Gratitude money above 1m yen is far above the socially acceptable level, even if the money was offered to the imperial



Prince Tomohito at Oxford: Did well from cycle races

the conservative *Yomiuri* was outspoken in its criticism, urging an open debate and expressing incredulity at the Imperial Household Agency's explanation.

The most poignant aspect of the affair is the light it casts on imperial finances. Outside the Emperor's immediate family, an imperial prince receives an annual stipend of 27.1m yen (£170,000) a year, and a princess half of that. All other income, from books and speeches for instance, is taxed, as are inheritances. When Prince Takamatsu died, his widow was forced to give the nation most of his estate, to keep a small part of it. The mayor of Otsu told a sad story about this.

"On one occasion, when I'd given the money to one of the officers, the princess smiled at me. 'I don't have any voting rights', she told me, 'but I still have to pay inheritance tax'."

Prince Tomohito, the other race sponsor, suffers from cancer and recently came out of hospital. Unlike a commoner, he receives no social security.

In medieval Japan, some emperors were reduced to such poverty that one was forced to sell his autograph to buy food. Things are not that bad yet, but the most surprising thing about the cycle-race scandal is that Prince Takamatsu and Prince Tomohito genuinely seem to have needed the money.

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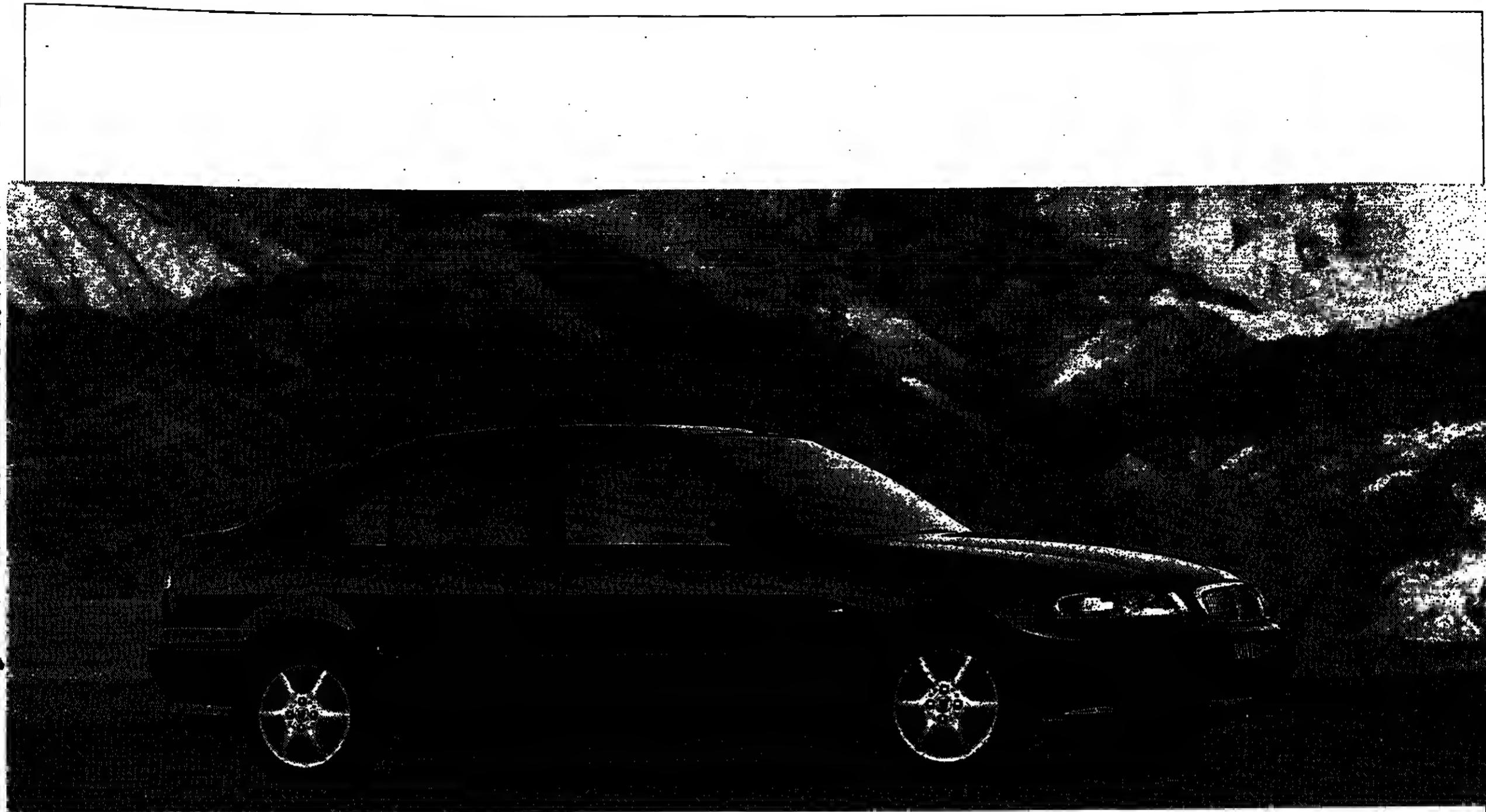
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ABOVE ALL, IT'S A ROVER

international

Hugh O'Shaughnessy reports on British plans to equip and train troops notorious for massacres

UK to arm Guatemala regime of terror

Britain is training military personnel from Guatemala, the largest and most powerful of the Central American republics, which has one of the worst human rights records in the world.

A Foreign Office spokesman also confirmed yesterday that Britain has lifted a ban on sales of military equipment to Guatemala.

The Government sees the possibility of important sales of arms and counter-insurgency equipment in a large market which has for years been supplied from Israel. Guatemala's staunchest ally.

The news of Britain's military involvement in Guatemala comes as new details filter out of the latest in the Guatemalan army's long catalogue of massacres. On 5 October, at Xamán in the department of Alta Verapaz, a patrol of 26 soldiers killed 10 former refugees who had recently returned from Mexico, seriously wounding 15 more and leaving a score of others suffering less extensive injuries. They were members of the indigenous Maya community, who form the majority in Guatemala but have been the principal victims of a little-reported war which has killed an

estimated 150,000 people over the past 40 years. The killing has produced a protest from the UN Secretary General and the resignation of the Defence Minister, General Mario Enriquez.

"The proposed training is very minor and developmental," said the Foreign Office spokesman. He would not reveal the number of soldiers who would undergo training here or in Guatemala, but added: "We are supporting the peace process."

The Guatemalan government and guerrilla groups are holding talks in Mexico City, aimed at bringing about social reform in the deeply divided country and halting the decades of hostilities.

In August, the Foreign Office announced help to the Guatemalan police, but denied reports of British military aid. Edmundo Nanne, the Guatemalan ambassador to Britain, confirmed yesterday that an army colonel and naval and police officers were receiving training in Britain. A military cadet is starting at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst.

The British action has been greeted with disquiet by



Boot camp: The Guatemalan army's outrages have drawn protests from the UN

Photograph: Paul Smith/Paros

Amnesty International and other human rights groups. They point out that the United States has halted aid and military sales because of Guatemala's record, which has also entangled the Central Intelligence Agency in a continuing scandal in Washington.

"The measure is not supporting but undermining peace in Guatemala," said Lord Avebury, chairman of the Parliamentary Human Rights Group.

The Government, he added, was breaking the 1993 declara-

tion of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, banning the sale of arms that could be used for internal repression or could exacerbate existing conflicts.

The British decision comes after a senior British diplomat and a police adviser visited the region recently for discussions with the Guatemalan authorities, who for decades were in armed confrontation with Britain over neighbouring British Honduras. Last month John Deutch, the newly ap-

pointed head of the CIA, took the rare step of dismissing two of his senior staff, Terry Ward and Fred Brugger, and disciplining seven more for their involvement in some of the more murderous activities of the Guatemalan forces.

Colonel Julio Alpírez of the Guatemalan army, who had been trained by the US army and given a \$44,000 payoff on leaving the CIA payroll, was found to have murdered a US citizen, Michael Devine, in 1990 in northern Guatemala.

Col Alpírez was also found responsible for the death under torture in 1992 of Efrain Barraza, a guerrilla who was married to an American lawyer, Jennifer Hartbury.

CIA staff kept their involvement and knowledge from Ms Hartbury till she forced it out of them after staging a hunger strike outside the White House.

Although US military aid to Guatemala was formally ended in 1990, the CIA continued it until December 1993. Ms Hartbury is suing the agency.

OJ affair passes from tragedy to farce

RUPERT CORNWELL
WASHINGTON

Hours after pulling out of a scheduled television interview, OJ Simpson called the *New York Times* to proclaim his innocence and give his first extensive comments on life after acquittal for double murder by a Los Angeles jury - though not by the majority of the American people.

In a 45-minute conversation,

the former football star told the paper's media correspondent, Bill Carter, that he had not killed his former wife, Nicole Brown Simpson, and her friend Ronald Goldman and that, despite polls showing up to 70 per cent of Americans sure of his guilt, "I don't think most of America believes I did it."

Explaining his decision to cancel the NBC interview, which would have been one of the most watched events in US

television history, Simpson said he bowed to the unanimous advice of his lawyers, concerned that anything he said might be used in the civil suit against him brought by the Goldman and Brown families: "They told me I was being set up, they felt the interview would be tantamount to a grand jury hearing."

But he insisted: "I am an innocent man." He declared himself willing to "sit and debate" the case at any time with Mar-

cia Clark, the lead state prosecutor. Simpson denied he was about to marry his girlfriend, Paula Barbieri. Nor had his "Dream Team" of defence attorneys bled him dry. "I still have my Ferrari - my Bentley ... my home in Brentwood ... my apartment in New York."

The saga of the interview denied and the interview granted marks another step in the passage of the Simpson affair from tragedy to surreal farce. Tom

Brokaw - NBC's star anchorman who was to have conducted the "no-holds-barred" encounter on Wednesday - interrupted programming to break the news of the cancellation with a gravity comparable to Franklin Roosevelt telling America about the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

The non-event created a furor nearly as great as the real thing. Mr Brokaw's historic statement was replayed in news bulletins through the evening, while the media had another field day talking about themselves - a subject dear to their hearts than any, except OJ.

Elsewhere, the lunacy continues. Mark Fuhrman, the racist LAPD officer at the centre of the case, was reported to be in Bermuda - a bit of a

sent film crews scurrying there. But he proved to be one Mark Fuhrman (without the "u"), a bemused New Jersey lawyer.

relations are coming full circle.

Within months of the end of the Second World War, Washington ordered the OSS working with Ho's Viet Minh nationalists to withdraw so that France could reassert control over its Indochina colony. Ho defeated the French in 1954. The US then began supporting the pro-Western government in South Vietnam, finally sending troops to fight a devastating war against Hanoi-led Communist forces.

Why the brave new world of chips is child's play

BOSTON DAYS

At the Media Lab, even the lunch is clever. The wine is clever because it is bottled with its own electronic mail label: <http://1010virtualvin.com>. The food is clever (though rather disgusting) because it is wrapped in coloured squares of plastic sheet and concealed within aluminium tiffin boxes that we are invited to take home. The helium balloons are very clever; if you talk to them they answer back.

But then this whole day is dedicated to cleverness, not just in humans, although everyone here has more than their share, but in machines. This is the 10th birthday of the Media Lab at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), and we are at a symposium

from the computer of the one to the computer of the other. For the sake of the demo, the information - e-mail address included - is projected onto a screen. The possibilities for silent communication between humans this way are fantastic. Could this spell the end of the Masonic handshake?

But it is Seymour Papert, the Lab's Lego Professor, who jogs me awake. His special interest is computers and children. With money from Lego - the Lab, by the way, has a \$25m (£16m) budget supplied by sponsorships with over 100 commercial companies - he is developing Lego brick toys fitted with mini processors that will be able to interact with children and play games with them.

"Our ways of dealing with the process of growing up are unravelling," Professor Papert says. "We are looking at the most radical transformation in human life that will happen in the next decade." Hype? Certainly. But where children and computers collide, my guess is that it is understatement too.

DAVID USBORNE

celebrate the fact. Needless to say, it is the 10th day of the 10th month and the programme began at 10 past 10.

Clever and very cool. In the world of academic, there are few places as modern as the Media Lab. From its pleasing IM Pei-designed building on the MIT campus close to the Charles River, the Lab has a mission to explain the new universe unfolding before all of us: the universe of personal computing, of the Net and the Web, of browsing and surfing, of chips and bits and of mice without tails.

No wonder Nicholas Negroponte, founder of the Lab and the very prophet of digital hip, exudes an I-told-you-so air when he steps on stage. That thing called the World Wide Web (pardon me if I don't attempt to describe it, but I know it is there) is doubling in size every 55 days. Two thirds of all PCs today are heading, not into offices, but into homes.

"The rate of change is just extraordinary, and it's going to

from the computer of the one to the computer of the other. For the sake of the demo, the information - e-mail address included - is projected onto a screen. The possibilities for silent communication between humans this way are fantastic. Could this spell the end of the Masonic handshake?

Veteran US agents go back to Vietnam

BRUCE STANLEY
Associated Press

Hanoi — Six American veterans, stooped with age but smiling like old friends, reunited yesterday with Vietnamese they helped train 50 years ago to fight their common enemy, Japan.

The former members of the US Office of Strategic Services, precursor of the Central Intelligence Agency, swapped Second World War-era tales of parachute jumps, radio codes and Japanese surrender with their silver-haired hosts.

Underlying their often emotional exchange was a strong sense of lost opportunities for friendship between the US and Vietnam - and a hunger to build close relations from the wreckage of what the Vietnamese call the American War.

"It's the most remarkable thing to me that the people we hurt so much invited us back," said Carleton Swift Jr., 76. Swift, a retired CIA officer living in Washington, DC, who commanded the OSS unit in Hanoi after Ho Chi Minh declared Vietnam's independence from colonial France.

"The tragedy of the Vietnam War is so overwhelming that I didn't think they could ever get over it, but they did," said former Marine lieutenant, Charles

Fenn, 88. Mr Fenn, a writer whose home is west Cork, Ireland, helped organise secret radio communications with Ho's ragtag guerrilla force.

The two veterans were among the Americans invited to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Vietnam-USA Society. They joined in a discussion with Vietnamese historians and old soldiers at the society's Hanoi headquarters and their talks, due to last two days, were symbolic proof that

relations are coming full circle.

Within months of the end of the Second World War, Washington ordered the OSS working with Ho's Viet Minh nationalists to withdraw so that France could reassert control over its Indochina colony. Ho defeated the French in 1954. The US then began supporting the pro-Western government in South Vietnam, finally sending troops to fight a devastating war against Hanoi-led Communist forces.

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Minister under threat from a family firm

PEOPLE

Andrei Kozyrev, the Russian Foreign Minister, is in for a double whammy in the campaign to keep his seat in the country's parliamentary elections in December. Vladimir Zhirinovsky, the ultra-nationalist Liberal Democratic Party leader who regularly lays into the foreign minister for policies he says have eroded Russia's might, is fielding his sister Lyubov to contest Mr Kozyrev's Murmansk seat in the State Duma.

She is an ordinary woman of Russia. She is 52 years old, an engineer, and she has had a simple, hard life," Mr Zhirinovsky said, adding that she had "learned about international affairs through her own experiences".

Her ever-helpful brother noted: "There have been so many people killed abroad, so much bloodshed, so much moral and financial damage done that my sister, if she were elected, could not be more harmful [than Mr Kozyrev]."



Rao: Love on a laptop

portrayed by the purple thumb prints and X's of illiterate Chiapas Indians.

And, for the fifth time, there is Jimmy Carter, this time for his work in Haiti and Korea. Should he lose again, Mr Carter probably will take it well.

Mr Rao's view of politics in his book is not entirely favourable. "There comes a time when politics seem pointless, even to a politician," he writes. "It holds no promise, brings no rewards, affords no satisfaction. On the other hand, it leaves you fretting under a relentless maligning blitz from all sides."

One chapter perfected the art ofounding his party's ideology endlessly, without believing a word of it. It worked very well and he found that by and large he was in identical company. No one gave a damn

MARYANN BIRD

Desiderata © 1923 by Max Ehrmann

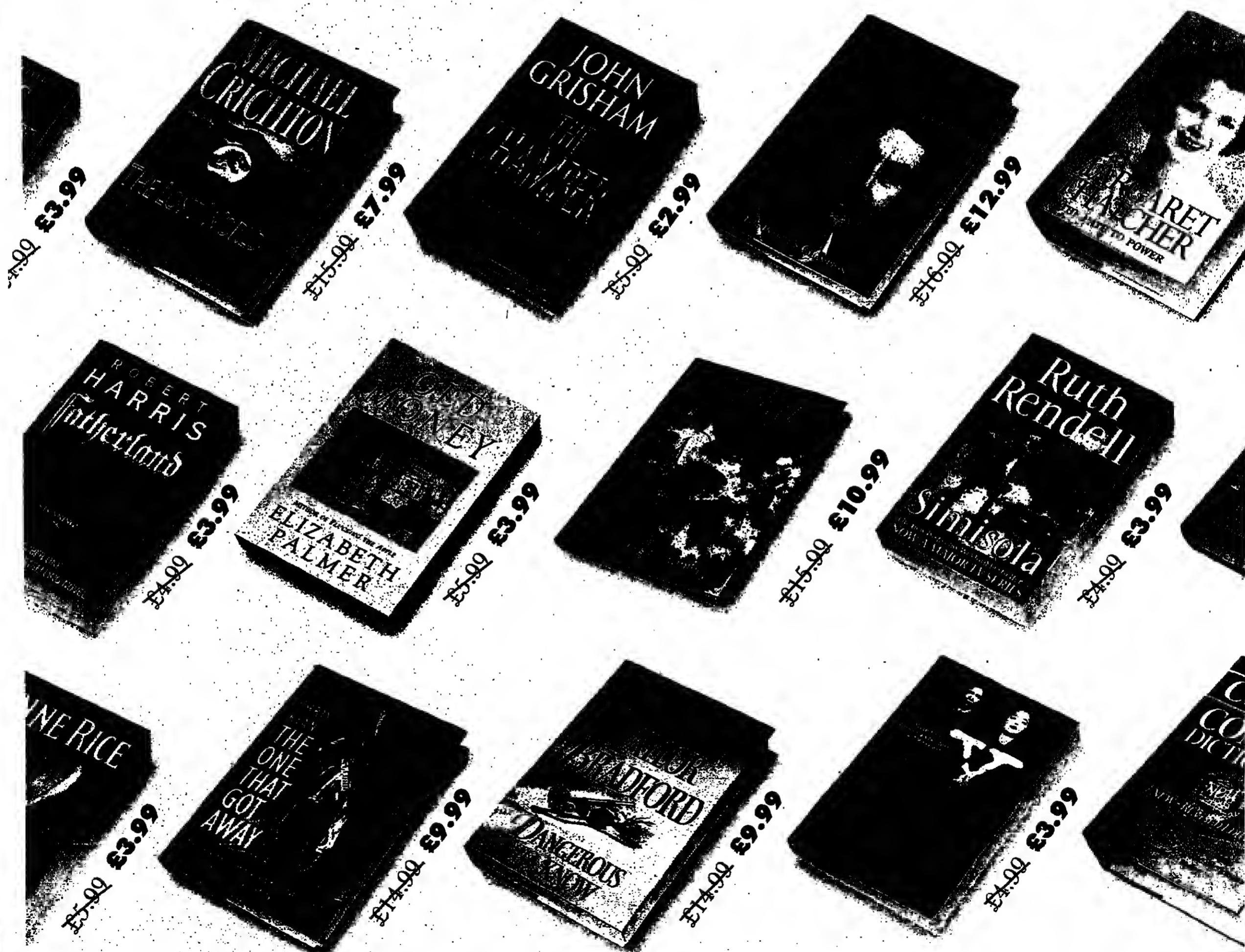
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international

Colonial legacy may split Cameroon

REBECCA DODD

The simmering secessionist movement in the West African country of Cameroon will come to the boil tomorrow when a group representing the country's English speakers declares that at least 1.3m of the 4m population are in favour of breaking away. The Southern Cameroons Nuclear Congress wants the south of the country - formerly a British colony, unlike the North, which was ruled by France - to gain independence.

Though the SCNC claims to have strong links with the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office, it is unlikely to mobilise much international backing. But the declaration will

embarrass the country's francophone government which, as it prepares to become the 52nd member of the Commonwealth, claims to have reconciled francophone-anglophone divisions.

President Paul Biya is

no doubt hoping that Commonwealth membership will bring respectability at home and abroad. Cameroon will be only the third Commonwealth member not once wholly governed by Britain.

The SCNC has filed its own application for Commonwealth membership on behalf of the Southern Cameroons. Its delegation will be a thorn in the side of Mr Biya when he attends the last Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in October 1993. Specifically, they want long overdue local elections to

Commonwealth membership is a sign of a growing distance between France and its former colony. President Jacques Chirac left Cameroon out of his recent tour of West Africa and is said to be impatient with reports of corruption and mismanagement there.

English and French-speaking opposition groups have united to lobby the Commonwealth to reject Cameroon's application. They argue that there has been no progress on human rights and the democratisation requested as a pre-condition for Cameroon's membership at the last Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in October 1993.

At present, parliament sits for

only two months of the year and

the president has wide powers to rule by decree. Opposition groups also fear collusion with Nigeria and a high-level government delegation is reported to have visited Nigeria with assurances that, if admitted, Cameroon would oppose sanctions against Nigeria.

French Cameroon became independent in 1960. The following year a UN plebiscite was held and the northern half of the former British Cameroons joined Nigeria while the southern half joined the former French territory. But independence calls have never quite died. The SCNC says the plebiscite was illegal and complains that while the Southern Cameroons agreed to join a re-

public of "equal status" they have since been "re-colonised" by the francophone region.

The two areas have different legal and educational systems. English-speakers have long said that the government exploited their region's natural resources in particular oil, but did little to improve living conditions. Anglophones also feel neglected by the French, who directed almost all of their post-independence aid to the francophones and whose Mafia-style business links are popularly believed to be responsible for much economic mismanagement.

Moreover, the French ignored fraud at the 1992 Presidential election, because they could not bare to see an

English-speaker - John Fru Ndi - head the government.

Many observers feel that if there is a surge of support for the secessionists, it has more to do with economic decline than any real cultural difference. Cameroon has the same level of poverty as it had in 1964. Unemployment and inflation are high, social services disintegrating and evidence of government waste is everywhere.

Just one example, reported by *Africa Analysts*, is that the government has ordered a CEAS3m (£190,000) statue of the President's late wife. This from a government with a debt of \$2.7bn (£1.7bn) and plans to make 25,000 of its employees redundant.

Dili (AP) — Indonesian riot police and troops fired in the air and used tear gas yesterday to disperse rival gangs of youths on the third day of unrest in the capital of East Timor, which has so far left two people dead.

No injuries were reported, but gangs of anti- and pro-independence youths continued to roam the streets of Dili, forming barricades with empty petrol drums, old furniture and tree branches to disrupt traffic. Sporadic gunfire was heard.

The Indonesian Foreign Minister, Ali Alatas, blamed the rioting on activists working abroad for East Timorese independence, saying it was another attempt to foment trouble in the former Portuguese colony. Indonesian troops seized the territory in 1976, after Portugal pulled out, but the United Nations still recognises Portugal as the administrative power. Most Timorese are Catholic and speak Portuguese, hindering their integration into Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim nation.

Most shops were closed and public transport stopped as the military responded to a call by the governor, Abilio Jose Soares, to end the unrest.

The trouble started on Tuesday, after police arrested a pro-independence activist, said a local council member, Manuel Carrascalao. Two men were stabbed to death and 18 people were injured in street fighting. Mr Carrascalao said, five people have been arrested.

The fighting underscored the simmering tensions in East Timor, where pro-independence feeling is strong.

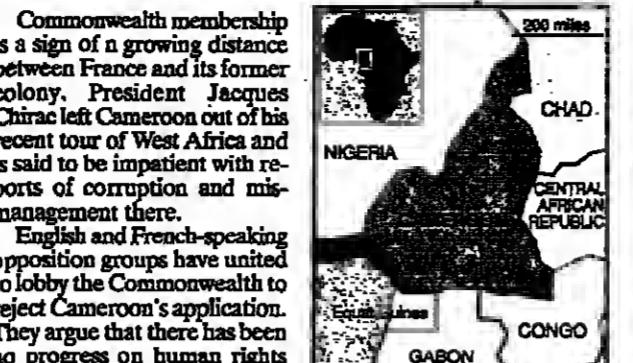
In Jakarta the armed forces spokesman, Brigadier-General Suwarno Adiwijaya, said the situation in Dili would be easily controlled, and there was no reason to use excessive force.

Mr Alatas refused to comment on reports that Bishop Filipe Ximenes Belo, a critic of the government who heads the Catholic Church in East Timor, is among five nominees for this year's Nobel Peace Prize.

But he welcomed Australia's decision to deny refugee status to 18 East Timorese who landed in Darwin in May. Australia is one of the few countries which recognises Indonesia's rule over East Timor.

The S

Troops fire on E Timor rioters



be held, an independent electoral commission, the lifting of pre-press censorship and constitutional reform.

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Crisis threatens to disrupt poll in South Africa

PRAKASH NAIDOO

Tensions in South Africa's government of national unity, and in the violence-prone province of KwaZulu-Natal, overshadowed a vote yesterday by parliament to hold historic local elections next month.

Polls to replace the last remnants of apartheid in South Africa's elected institutions have been bedevilled for months by uncertainty over voter registration and haggling over local authority boundaries. Although the National Assembly voted yesterday to go ahead on 1 November, KwaZulu-Natal will sit out the process for at least another five months.

The parliamentary debate, however, caused the worst in fighting between the African National Congress and its governing partner, the National Party, since the national election 17 months ago. Mac Maharaj, the ANC Minister of Transport, and leader of the NP, FW de Klerk, to be sacked as chairman of the cabinet committee on security and intelligence, accusing him of threatening a coup while addressing a party rally last weekend.

Yesterday President Nelson Mandela's office moved to dispel rumours, believed to have started in financial markets in London, that Mr de Klerk had resigned, although the ANC said it supported Mr Maharaj's call for his dismissal. Mr de Klerk said he had been misquoted.

Tension between the two parties has been aggravated by ANC claims that the NP was attempting to manipulate the electoral boundaries in the Western Cape, the only province controlled by the party, to improve its chances next month. Polls will go ahead except in the greater Cape Town metropolitan area, the centre of the dispute.

Voting will also be delayed in KwaZulu-Natal, the power base of Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi's Inkatha Freedom Party, which has seen the worst wrangling over boundaries. Peter Miller, Inkatha's provincial housing minister, said yesterday that it would be impossible to go ahead with elections before 27 March next year, the deadline set in the new legislation. If KwaZulu-Natal fails to meet the deadline, the central government is empowered to appoint administrators to run the province.

Fighting between the Zulu nationalists of Inkatha and



Generation game: Nelson Mandela greeting children at the site of a planned youth centre

Photograph: Juda Ngwenya/Reuters

ANC supporters has killed scores of people in the province in recent months. This, coupled with bitter disputes over boundaries, has undermined any hope of a trouble-free election.

Inkatha, which governs KwaZulu-Natal with a small majority, has argued for a high degree of autonomy from the central government, and Chief Buthelezi is accused of seeking the secession of the province.

The party is refusing to include any tribal areas within the electoral boundaries of the cities, and the issue will now be referred to a special electoral

court, probably by early next month, for a final decision.

In the rest of the country there is increasing concern that voters' rolls may not be up to date. Despite a massive voter

education drive in the past six months, a survey this week revealed that many people still believe they can simply turn up at the polls and vote, as they did last year.

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Big-money haggling is about to change our whole sporting culture, say Mathew Horsman and David Hellier

The Sky's the limit for sport on TV

Once again British sport is about to change radically. And just like last time, television and money – lots of it – are behind the transformation. The creation of football's Premier League in 1992, and its migration to pay-TV through the satellite broadcaster Sky, was the first revolution. It changed the country's favourite sport for ever – ploughing a quarter of a billion pounds into the game, improving television coverage and helping to fund the refurbishing of stadiums throughout Britain, as well as providing a large pot to fuel escalating pay scales for star players.

The deal with Sky took top-level live football off free television, forcing the serious fan to dish out for a satellite dish and pay Sky a subscription fee. Now, as broadcasters and club owners engage in fresh talks over renewing television contracts, viewers may even have to "pay per view", match by match, as the digital era dawns.

The changes imposed on football have been gentle compared to the revolution occurring in rugby league, where the game has even had its season reinvented. An £89m deal designed to hijack the Australian Rugby League with Rupert Murdoch, who owns 40 per cent of Sky, and is responsible for one of the biggest changes in the history of the game here.

From next March matches will be played in the summer in order to fit in with his proposed Australian super league, and the changes will not stop there. Mr Murdoch's News International, at the game's paymaster, will determine how, when and where it will be played.

Football is a mightier force and has been able to resist such fundamental changes – so far. But the advent of 200-channel television will test its resistance to the full.

Against the odds, Sky's relationship to date with football has been relatively sweet, and has not in the main outraged traditionalists.

A proud Sam Chisholm, chief executive of Sky and confidante of Mr Murdoch, says: "It is the most rewarding partnership we have, and the benefits that have flowed to the clubs, the fans and the viewers are enormous."

But if Sky thinks it has helped football, there is no doubt how much of a boost football has given to Sky. Without it the successful flotation of the BSkyB group last year would have been a good deal harder, if not impossible, to achieve.

There is a growing awareness in the football industry about just how

critical football has been to Sky's success," says Roger Devlin of Henry Antsbacher, financial advisers to a number of leading football clubs. One club owner puts it more bluntly: "Let's face it, the Premier League made Sky. In retrospect, we sold our rights too cheaply and look like idiots."

Sky became Britain's most profitable television broadcaster and it is now the biggest producer of sports programming, spending £100m a year compared to the BBC's £90m and ITV's £40m. It dominates virtually all senior football – to such an extent, indeed, that frustrated

By 2000, viewers are likely to have a huge choice. One thing is clear – the fans will be expected to pay

competitors complain about the Murdoch monopoly: "It almost defines logic that anyone can compete with him."

The move from "free" to pay had other consequences. Where once as many as 12 million people would watch the highlights of a game on ITV or BBC, a Premier League match on Sky might get an audience of 2 million. But the coverage itself is massively improved, as even Sky's harshest critics concede, and since Sky started showing football live attendance has gone up.

The last Sky deal, though, left the rest of the Football League hanging, stuck with a relatively paltry deal

with ITV and with no share in the fortunes showered on the breakaway top clubs.

All that looks set to change, and the implications not only for football but for all televised sports are huge. For the next generation of sports rights will take us into the era of digital television and the prospect of wall-to-wall sporting events.

Even more money will be thrown at sports on TV – perhaps £800m over five years for the Premier League alone. The rump of the Football League, the First, Second and Third divisions, stand to gain more than £120m in that period, with the FA Cup and international matches generating perhaps £150m.

Cricket rights might fetch £5m when the current contract is renewed, while a host of secondary rights (for replays, highlights and the like) could sweeten the sports pot further.

Just how many events will be available to the average viewer is unknown. But one thing is clear: the fan will have to pay for the extra choice.

It is pay-TV that has driven prices to these dizzying heights: the whole point for Sky is buy exclusive rights, obliging viewers to ante up for the privilege of watching. By 2000, viewers are likely to have a huge choice. But they will be expected to pay, either for subscriptions to satellite and cable, or even for smart cards to plug into set-top boxes, giving them home and away games of their favourite teams on digital television.

Football has already shown the way and rugby is not far behind. Only the few events listed by the Broadcasting Act, including the FA Cup and Wimbledon, will be safe from pay-per-view, although there is nothing stopping satellite or cable broadcasters snapping up the rights

to these hallowed events as well.

The first outlines of the future of televised sports are discernible in tense talks now under way to renew the contracts for football. The landmark Premier deal, worth £21.8m over five years for the top 20 clubs, expires at the end of next season, and the broadcasters and football owners are jockeying for position.

At the same time, contracts for the rights to cup finals and internationals, along with the Endsleigh (non-Premier) League, are also under negotiation.

It is a messy, complicated business. The whole concept of rights in the UK is embryonic, with broadcasters traditionally calling the shots and sports organisations accepting their wishes. Sky helped to change that, by showing just how much money was available. Club owners, the Football Association, the Rugby League and other rights holders have responded by becoming more creative – working together to package rights, for example, or pushing for elaborate profit-sharing arrangements with broadcasters.

Most advanced are the talks between all three main broadcasters and the Football Association, whose commercial director, Trevor Phillips, has put together a draft proposal combining the FA's own rights – the FA Cup and international matches – with the Football League. He has secured promises of £25m over five years from Sky, of which the Foot-

ball League would receive £13.3m.

As part of the agreement, both the BBC and ITV would "sub-let" rights from Sky, and at least some Football League games would be shown on terrestrial television. Sky would inaugurate Friday night football, featuring matches from the Football League. The deal, put yesterday in Football League club owners, must be approved within 14 days, insists Mr Phillips.

The Premier League, meanwhile, is making its own pitch to the Football League owners, hoping to entice them into joining forces and securing an even better deal from the broadcasters. David Dein, vice-chairman of Arsenal, says his objective is to "maximise revenues for the game. I, for one, do not believe football should be selling its rights case night. We should have a dialogue with all the main players in football."

If that approach fails, the top 20 teams will again sit down with Sky, and hammer out a renewal of their current deal.

Other potential bidders may be lurking on the sidelines. Companies such as IMG, the sports agency, and the media companies Pearson and Mirror Group, are all believed to be

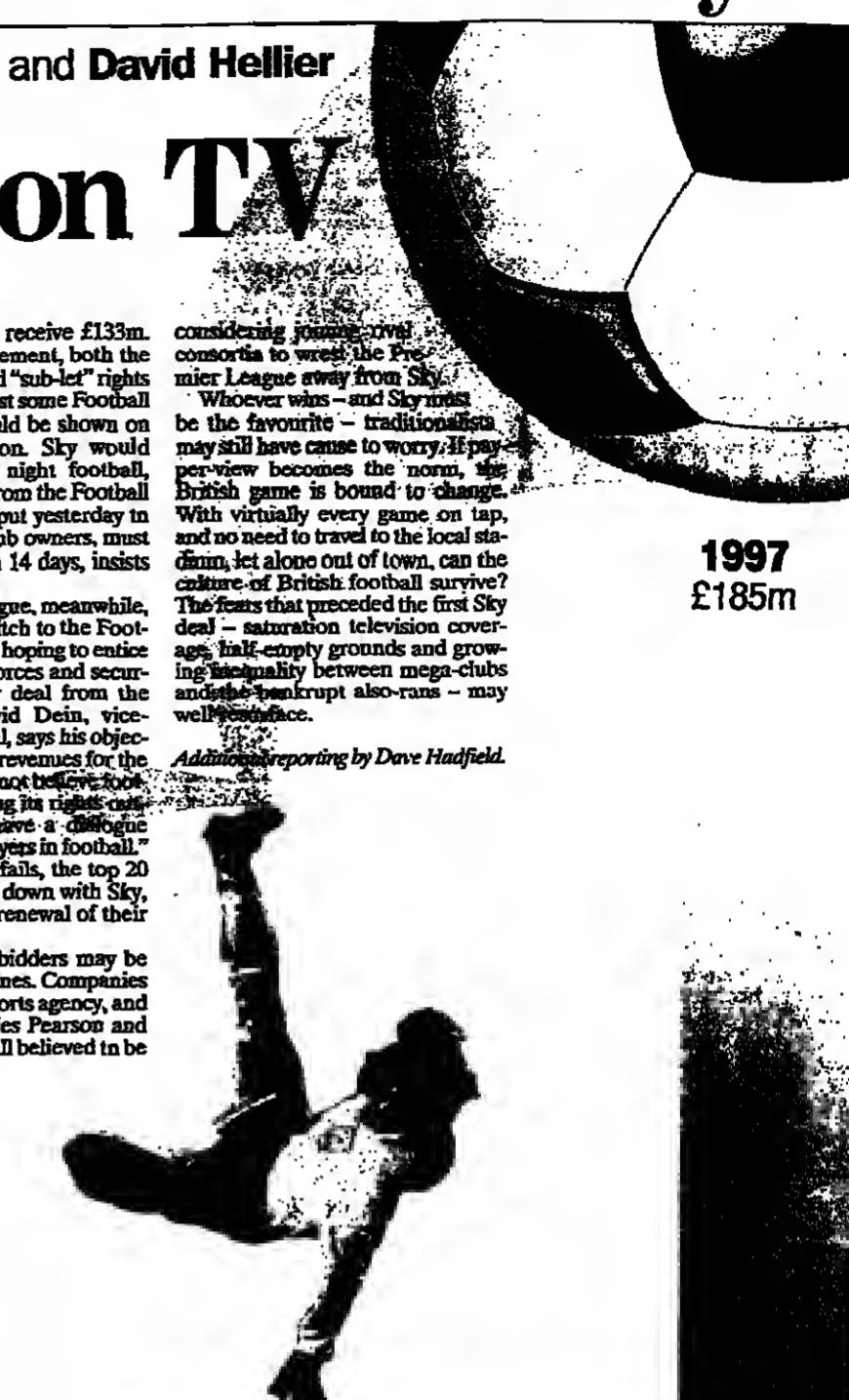
considering moves to form a consortium to wrest the Premier League away from Sky.

Whoever wins – and Sky may be the favourite – traditionalists may still have cause to worry. If pay-per-view becomes the norm, the British game is bound to change. With virtually every game on tap, and no need to travel to the local stadium, let alone out of town, can the culture of British football survive?

The fears that preceded the first Sky deal – saturation television coverage, half-empty grounds and growing hostility between mega-clubs and the bankrupt also-rans – may well resurface.

Additional reporting by Dave Hadfield.

1997
£185m



Listed events

Under the 1990 Broadcasting Act, viewers receiving cable or satellite TV should not pay an additional fee for "listed events". Nothing prevents listed events being exclusively shown on satellite/cable channels: each sporting organisation decides on its own TV contracts. Rugby Union and Wimbledon have so far decided to stay with terrestrial television to reach a larger audience. Rugby League however, because of underfunding, has negotiated a deal with Sky.

Listed events are:

Cricket: England's test matches
Racing: the Derby, Grand National
Football: the World Cup finals, FA Cup final, Scottish FA Cup final
Tennis: finals weekend of Wimbledon
Olympic Games

The Commonwealth Games and the Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race were initially considered but finally removed from the list.

Value of broadcast rights to football

£1000 2000 3000 4000 5000 6000 7000 8000 9000 10000

Witnesses

Kremlinologists in the Conservative Party bunker tell me it was no accident that Baroness Thatcher (Happy Birthday, my dear) found herself beside the Prime Minister for Ken Clarke's speech to the party conference yesterday. Wilkes finds it hard to believe, but it was the first time on record that the Prime Minister and his predecessor have sat together on the platform.

It was carefully stage-managed by that wily Ulster matchmaker Brian Mawhinney, the party chairman, to emphasise continuity and unity. Lady Thatcher sat on Mr Major's right, while Ken Clarke, Margaret's Brutus, sat on his left. All that was needed to complete the happy picture was Sir Edward Heath. But the canny old buffer understandably thought better of making up the numbers.

He was already safely back in the comfort of Cathedral Close, Salisbury.

Of course, as Father of the House, my redoubtable friend Sir Edward has no need to adjust his suits either for the Prime Minister or today's birthday girl. Indeed, it is not lost on Sir Edward that the death of Lord Home gives him even more gravitas. He is now the senior former prime minister, putting one over on Baroness Thatcher.

And he will not be sorry to miss John Major's keynote speech today in Blackpool. Sir Edward has brittle stomach for the Nuremberg rallies in the Conservative Party conference hall, having witnessed Hitler address the real thing. After the event, the young pro-European Heath was introduced at a reception to some of the German party leaders, including Himmelfeld. "He had a very watery handshake," Sir Edward remembered. Wilkes observed it was like John Gummer's "I have never shaken John Gummer's hand," said the former prime minister.

In the rush for safe Tory seats did Tim Collins, former Central Office



Has one met somewhere before?

director of communications and briefly Downing Street political adviser, jump too soon in securing the plum and deeply beautiful Westmorland and Lonsdale? The constituency is one of the most beautiful in the country, but far away from Westminster. Sad for poor Mr Collins, he headed to distant parts before the frequently untroubled transport minister Steven Norris announced that he would stand down from his Epping Forest stronghold, no doubt to spend more time with his secondhand cars. The constituency association chairman is none other than Di Collins, mother of Tim.

Wilkes has an idea for the Millennium Fund. Never mind spending it on refurbishing village halls. It should be used to create a permanent audio-visual exhibition of Michael Heseltine's past conference speeches. During his performance this week Wilkes was suddenly impressed by the thought that he was witnessing the end of an era for a politician aptly dubbed Widow Twankey. Heza in full

flow is as remarkable as the Niagara Falls and ought to be preserved for the nation.

This conference is not like 1986, when the Tories turned the tide. There is a whiff of decay about A Team of Labour Party activists is going to try to get the message across to the Cabinet this morning with a 40ft-high quotation from the Blair speech all about the Tories wrapping themselves in the flag while destroying the fabric of society. It will be written in the sand outside the main conference hotel on the Blackpool Prom. It is to be hoped they have studied their tide tables correctly. Otherwise, it could be a wash out.

Michael Dobbs, the former Tory vice chairman, has done it again. His *House of Cards*, about a prime minister ousted in a party leadership election, was turned into a BBC drama on the eve of the fall of Margaret Thatcher. Next month (staring on bonfire night), the BBC starts its serialisation of his *The Final Cut*. Mr Dobbs' powers of prediction are unimpaired. *The Final Cut* features a character called Tom Makepiece, who crosses the floor of the House, unable to stay in the same party as the cynical, manipulative Francis Urquhart. Come to think of it, Alan Howarth does look a little like a bit-part actor in a TV drama.

The tough-talking Hezza clearly has a disciple in the diminutive but

just not the closet type

sturdy figure of Gillian Shephard. For the first time in her life, Mrs Shephard objected to the size of her hotel room, and effected a swift change to something a little larger than a broom cupboard at the Imperial Hotel. At last, Gillian is showing real signs of leadership tendencies.

Sir George Young travelled to Blackpool by train on Monday, and was asked by a customer services operative to fill out a questionnaire about the Poole to Edinburgh cross-country service. Under "occupation", he dutifully wrote out "Secretary of State for Transport". The next question was: "To whom is your report?" Sir George was going to put "The Queen", but then consulted his political advisers. After discussion, he wrote "The Prime Minister". No doubt the InterCity employee who received the form snatched it from him or herself, "Another mutter", and filed it in the bin.

Like most right-thinking people with medals in his top drawer, Wilkes's normally robust stomach was left uneasy by Michael Portillo's performance, in which he verbally doomed the sandy beret of the SAS. His macho performance has been the subject of much ribald comment among the drinking classes at Jeffrey Archer's splendid parties. One young Turk in the Tory high command told Wilkes it was "exploitation with military hardware".

It was all too much for one old soldier in the Tory high command, who said the Defence Secretary had faked his chance to serve his country by refusing to join a military cadet corps when he was a youth. Wilkes believes Mr Portillo's lack of a military record may come to haunt the young pretender. He will never be a Major. Ken Livingstone, who is doing a film for LWT, doffed his cap to Michael Portillo with a film crew as the Defence Secretary arrived at the Savoy Hotel, Blackpool, to address the annual dinner of the Thatcherite Conservative Way Forward group. "I've been exchanged for Alan Howarth," said Ken brightly. Mr Portillo was not amused.

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The voters aren't daft, Mr Howard

Michael Howard in crime-fightin' guy mode resembles nothing so much as an American police chief up for re-election. His speech to the Tory faithful yesterday claimed much ("we are taking our country back from the criminals") and promised more. Despite all the other possible claims on the Government's time – and despite the fairly recent introduction of the Criminal Justice Act – the Home Secretary committed himself to a new Crime Bill to be introduced in the relatively short time between now and the next general election.

No one could accuse Chief Howard of subtlety – his timetable is almost painfully political. He plans to embarrass Labour by bringing forward measures that Jack Straw and his colleagues are bound either to oppose for their illiberalism or that will divide them. Mr Howard knows full well that Labour believes (along with almost all the experts and the students of crime prevention) that longer and more mandatory sentences cause as many problems as they solve. And he judges that large sections of Middle Britain do not see it that way. The gulf is just waiting to be exploited.

Howard's way is clear. He will legislate for mandatory life sentences for second-time violent and sexual offenders and introduce stiffer minimum sentences for burglars and drug dealers. This, he argues, is what being tough on crime means. Those who oppose are therefore soft on crime.

Yet even as he basked in the inevitable ovation, Mr Howard knew one of these opponents was likely to be the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Taylor. Only a week ago the

two had a meeting in which Lord Taylor delivered his own strong preference for retaining the maximum discretion in sentencing. He argued that the problem of deterrence lay in low rates of detection, not in short sentences.

Mr Howard is entitled to disagree with the views of the judiciary. He could have argued that they were ignoring this key fact, or overlooking that bit of evidence. But he didn't. Instead he spoke as though the argument had never been made. He simply ignored the Lord Chief Justice.

And just as Michael Portillo had earlier managed to offend the services by his crass invocation of the SAS and the British fighting man, so Mr Howard brought the wrath of another institution – the judiciary – down around his ears. For Lord Taylor is a man of our times, prepared (unlike his predecessors) to enter the public lists where he sees the need. His intervention was momentous. He dismissed the idea that the threat of longer sentences deters habitual criminals. "What deters them is the likelihood of being caught, which at the moment," he added scathingly, "is small." "Does anyone believe," he went on, "that a professional burglar, who knows he has at most only three chances in 20 of being caught, will be deterred by the addition of six months to his sentence?"

Michael Howard has calculated that the answer to Lord Taylor's question is yes. We are not so sure. Underestimating the electorate's intelligence is a game politicians play at their peril. Especially when someone as persuasive as Lord Taylor is around to put the record straight.

Stand firm against tax cuts

As chancellors go, Kenneth Clarke has A been a good one. So far, in difficult political times he has held his nerve and stuck to a strategy to restrain inflation and deliver sustainable growth. But yesterday's speech suggests that he may be about to risk his reputation in pursuit of short-term political gain.

Paradoxically, the absence of a feel-good factor has helped the economy to grow without inflation taking off. A stable housing market, combined with hefty tax increases, have kept consumer spending subdued.

However, yesterday's unexpected jump in the underlying inflation figures, from 2.9 per cent to 3.1 per cent, shows the continuing fragility of our current non-inflationary growth. And given the risk that higher inflationary expectations may feed through to future wage rises and price rises, the Chancellor needs to proceed with caution, both on taxes and on interest rates.

However, such caution is not an attractive counsel when you are drifting to electoral defeat. The party craves a tax cut here, an interest rate cut there, and a boost for the housing market thrown in for good measure.

Mr Clarke should stand firm and not deliver. An interest rate cut when inflation is moving upwards faster than expected would be too risky. A tax cut funded by borrowing would only add to the inflationary pressures. A package for the housing market would also distort the fiscal regime and make it harder to deliver worthwhile reductions in the tax burden when they can be afforded.

ANOTHER VIEW Pam Ayres

Permit me my wrinkles

Well, I am all for it – clear and effective speech. I am not talking about the cut-glass stuff, the plumb in the mouth, the how-haw have a devil on horseback Claude. I mean people who know the words and use them correctly and can see how each sentence is going to finish before they start it. So when I read yesterday that Gillian Shepherd desires all our children to leave school speaking clearly and effectively in standard English, my first thought was, "Good on you!"

The thing that bothers me is the possibility that, by promoting only standard English, the other rich types of English usage are left to fossilise.

I know Mrs Shepherd says she is not referring to regional accents, but I wonder how successfully the two matters can be separated. What is it, anyway, this standard English? What does it outlaw? While I think any damage inflicted on regional speech patterns by Shepherd will be secondary to the blows already dealt it by a mobile population and a television in every living room, nevertheless regional dialects must be threatened further by the adoption of standard English. Does that matter? I believe it does.

Take one of my first boyfriends. He was a Geordie. For me, fresh from Stanford in the Vale, Berkshire, listening to him was like listening to a foreign language. I doubt that what he said to me was structured in standard English, but it was beautiful just the same.

Take my old uncle who lived in a little

The Chancellor's big problem is that growth is running slightly lower than expected, so there is no bonus from higher tax receipts – or lower spending on unemployment – to redistribute. That, of course, leaves a tax cut funded by spending cuts as Mr Clarke's only way forward.

Yet not one who heard him yesterday can doubt that he intends to unveil what he will call a tax-cutting Budget next month. By that he may well mean the sort of tax cuts we have had in the past 15 years – namely, not tax cuts at all but a re-juggling of the tax burden.

It is an entirely legitimate aim of a Tory government to pursue a genuinely lower overall tax take – something like the 3.5 per cent we had in the Sixties, rather than the 40 per cent-plus of the Eighties and Nineties. But this, even if desirable, could not be achieved by sleight of hand: it is only possible if the state's expenditure is radically recast, perhaps along the lines that were suggested this week by Norman Lamont.

Mr Clarke has never been this kind of radical. He cares too much about the NHS and the social security system. Which leaves only unsustainable tax cuts and gimmicks.

His likeliest budget trick is to promise a programme of falling taxes stretching over several years – to be funded by future and implausible spending cuts. This might be smart politics in that it would help interrogate Labour's hazy thinking on tax. But make no mistake, it would be a gimmick. We will probably be lucky if we get through the election with no folly greater than this.

Baroness who inspired Nobel



I'm not nickin' anythin'! Just warn Howard to lay off!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Michael Portillo's virtual reality leaves no room for the facts

From Mr A. L. Teasdale

Sir: Am I alone in having difficulty in recognising various statements in Michael Portillo's speech to the Conservative Party conference as accurate or real?

For example, the Defence Secretary says that qualified majority voting (QMV) will never be extended to foreign policy in Europe so long as the Conservatives are in power. Why, then, did John Major agree at Maastricht that QMV can be used for "implementing measures" in the foreign policy field?

Mr Portillo says Britain will not join a "single European army" under the Conservatives. Has he not read the interim report of the so-called Reflection Group preparing next year's Intergovernmental Conference (IGC)? This readily accepts the "national sovereignty remains the basic point of reference" in defence, where "consensus has to be the rule". Where is the threat from Brussels here?

Mr Portillo says Britain could never "merge our defence co-operation into the EU" under the Conservatives. Perhaps not, but is it not this Government which has proposed that the Western European Union (WEU) should hold defence summits dovetailing with those of the EU? And was it not Mr Major who agreed at Maastricht that the WEU

should develop "as the defence component of the EU"?

At Blackpool, Mr Portillo and others reportedly denounced concepts such as "ever-closer union" and continued European "integration". The first commitment is set down in the opening lines of the Rome and Maastricht treaties. The second concept was endorsed by the Government as recently as last month, when David Davis, Foreign Office Minister for Europe, was among those to "unanimously emphasise the need to continue and strengthen European integration", as reported in the IGC Reflection Group's interim report.

The virtual reality politics of Mr Portillo has no place for these facts. Just as he systematically accuses opponents in other parties of policies they do not support, so he forces pro-Europeans within the Conservative Party to conclude that his real agenda is, through wilful misrepresentation, to make Britain's continued membership of the EU unworkable. Yours faithfully,

ANTHONY TEASDALE
London SW3
11 October

From Mr Simon Berger

Sir: I beg to disagree with your editorial criticism of Michael Portillo's speech ("Michael Portillo's virtual reality leaves no room for the facts", 11 October).

Yours sincerely,

DAVID RICKARD
Riccall, North Yorkshire

From Mr Neil Calder

Sir: Around the world, the three letters SAS are immediately recognised as the acronym for Scandinavian Airlines and, not, as Michael Portillo clearly assumes, our Special Air Service. Non-Brits must be wondering why a most congenial airline should "seed a chill down the spine of the enemy". Which enemy, by the way?

Yours faithfully,
NEIL CALDER
Eccles, Lancashire
11 October

From Mr Peter Neill

Sir: Who now dares to put clear blue water between the Conservative Party and the National Front?

Yours faithfully,
PETER NEILL
Woking, Surrey
11 October

From Mr David Rickard

Sir:

I have the greatest respect for the SAS, and I resent its name being used for cheap political gains. In Michael Portillo's case, those letters spell out one clear message: Silly At [the] Seaside.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID RICKARD
Riccall, North Yorkshire
11 October

From Mr Peter Calvocoressi

Sir: I remember speeches like Mr Portillo's and their rapturous reception in the Thirties. But not in Britain.

Yours faithfully,
PETER CALVOCORESSI
Bath
11 October

From Mr Stephen Jakob

Sir: I have read the articles by Robert Fisk [about judicial punishments in the Gulf states] with horror but some of the correspondence that has followed (Letters, 11 October) appears to me to be at variance with the facts.

Gavin Sherrard Smith was flogged in secret by relays of police officers on 3 May 1994. Buried in the transcript of the Qatar court that ordered his flogging is the following curious judicial comment:

reprimand offences under religious jurisdiction are not required to be proven in the same way as the crimes that require the imposition of penalties and reprisals.

Religious courts in Qatar and, one suspects, elsewhere in the Moslem world, are therefore not required to conform to the requirements of the state criminal law.

The last religious court in Europe that had power to order imprisonment and beatings with regard to state laws was the Spanish Inquisition over 150 years ago. The learned arguments on Sharia law are surely beside the point in circumstances such as these.

Yours faithfully,
STEPHEN JAKOB
Fair Trials Abroad Trust
Richmond, Surrey
11 October

From Professor I. R. Pole

Sir: The Ambassador of Saudi Arabia (Another View, 10 October) and other members of the Muslim religion who have expressed their satisfaction at living under its laws, are all members of the male sex. It is, unfortunately, a little late to ask whether the decapitated female victims of these laws shared their satisfaction. Yours faithfully,

J. R. POLE
Oxford
11 October

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Good neighbour

From Dr John Orrell

Sir: As Professor Burchell's next-door neighbour, I am aghast at Karel Schuck's slur upon me (Letters, 11 October).

I was unable to remove the offending British Telecom directory because I, too, was away at the time. Only my cleaning lady's availability to take in the directory saved me from a similar fate.

On noticing the directory on my return, I went immediately to remove it from my neighbour's doorstep only to find that the burglar had already defeated my good intention. So I called the police, made a statement, gave the police constable a cup of tea, arranged the boarding-up, contacted my neighbour and later helped him to drown his sorrows by sharing with him a bottle of extraordinarily good wine (which he provided).

What more should I have done?

Yours faithfully,
JOHN ORRELL
London, N1
11 October

Two-parent policy

From Mr Tony Christopher

Sir: In his comments on Frank Field's suggestion that the lone parent premium should become an extra benefit for couples, Polly Toynbee ("Why single mothers must be treated like the 'kite round'", 11 October) asks: "Is any man really so much better than none?"

The evidence points to the answer "yes – probably". Research studies are showing that boys, in particular, are more likely to grow up troubled and troublesome lacking the presence and constructive influence of an adult male.

Any new policies made only with an eye to cash cost and paying no regard to knowledge of likely outcomes are at risk not only of wasting that cash but of creating fresh problems and new spending demands. It is not necessary to agree with all of Mr Field's ideas to appreciate that he is seeking not to make this mistake.

Yours faithfully,
TONY CHRISTOPHER
Chairman
TUI Fund Managers
London, WC1

False fears over the national debt

From Mr M. C. Kennedy

Sir: It is about time we had a truly independent view of the public finances. Gwyn Davies ("A mountain of reasons to reduce the public debt", 9 October) likes to keep up with the latest academic papers – Ricardian equivalence and all that! But these, unfortunately, can spell disaster for the policy-maker who takes them seriously.

The interest-raising effects of public deficits can, and almost always have been corrected by accommodating monetary policy. The small rises in real interest rates since the 1990s is not due to higher public debt, but to tighter monetary policy in reaction to the inflation of the 1970s. Nice as it would be to have no national debt at all, the consequences of reducing it – whether to enhance a politician's reputation or to meet the Maastricht guidelines – are bound to deflate national income and employment.

Yours faithfully,
M. C. KENNEDY
School of Economic Studies
University of Manchester
Manchester
11 October

Women artists, male critics

From Mr Rupert Lee

Sir: In answer to Clive Exton (letter, 30 September), it is worth pointing out that among the ranks of our recognised top artists women are very much in the minority, so it may not be surprising that one of the *Independent's* "40 women under 40" is an artist.

A reason for this lack of female artists is suggested by Gloria Moss's article ("One man's neat design is a woman's turn-off" (7 August)). Apparently, men and women have subtly different aesthetic tastes, and tend unconsciously to prefer works of art by members of their own sex.

If this is true, it explains why the higher echelons of the art

world remain in the hands of a self-perpetuating male clique.

The "arbiters of taste" – art critics, art gallery proprietors and dealers – are predominantly male, so without being in any way consciously sexist they tend to prefer and promote the works of male artists. As a result, the most famous works of fine art attract mainly male admirers, so, are again male ...

Only the occasional Dame Barbara Hepworth manages to challenge the hegemony. The immeasurable Dora Carrington of this world, lacking any serious encouragement, are fated to remain a few rungs further down the ladder.

Yours faithfully,
RUPERT LEE
London, WC1
2 October

NO
BRIAN MANN

1995

1996

1997

1998

1999

2000

Australia fails to last year

Of courtesy and Chinese orphans

Replying dutifully to letters is not worthwhile, especially where campaigners are concerned

Answering mail has always seemed to me a sacred duty and, although I have not always managed it, I have spent many thousands of hours and pounds struggling to cope with all kinds of missives, flattering, frightening, foolish or friendly. Now the worm is in the turn. I am steeling myself to bin without mercy, because answering letters is a courtesy too far in a world without scruples. A case in point is my correspondence with the Dying Rooms Trust.

If, as I did, you lingered long enough to catch the last hour of *GMTV* on Wednesday, you will have seen a handsome young English couple with a bouncy Chinese girl. They told how they had been so moved by *The Dying Rooms* documentary shown on Channel 4 in June that they had given up their place high on the list for adoption of an English-born child and shelled out £10,000 on a trip to China. They seemed out in the least cross that when they got there they didn't have the thrill of rescuing an infant from the brink of death but collected a well-cared-for child from a well-run institution. Of all the overseas adoption stories I have ever heard, this one was startlingly light on official obstructionism, deliberate stalling and delay and attempts at extortion. And never a mention of the Dying Rooms Trust.

The Dying Rooms Trust was set up in the immediate aftermath of the emotional shock caused by this caring nation by the documentary. Its stated aim was to "tackle the greatest ongoing tragedy the world has ever seen, namely the institutionalised cruelty and even murder of around 1 million

abandoned children a year in China". According to its publicity, "the mortality rate in China's filthy, over-crowded orphans is a horrifying 79 per cent." Clearly the young English couple went to a different China. I, too, have been to a different China. A trustee of the Dying Rooms Trust wrote to me in Angus asking for my support in raising funds (how else?) and informing me triumphantly that the trust was to be the beneficiary of the autumn appeal in the new series of *Anne and Nick*.

One of the most baffling attributes of the English is their tendency to believe that they would make far better parents of other people's offspring than they do of their own. Charity after charity begs us to save the children. (And this in a country where fathers spend less than five minutes a week in close contact with their children.) I greatly distrust our interest in other people's progeny and I distrust it even more in the context of the criminalisation of a quarter of the world's population. In China gaily dressed children are to be seen everywhere, perched on the handlebars of their fathers' bikes, snoozing on their mothers' backs, being held over the gutter to pee, always in close contact and communication with adults. The Chinese don't dub children adorable and then ignore them; they actually enjoy their company. To swap a child-centred culture for one that prefers the company of dogs seems to me no bargain. So I thought hard about the trust's letter for two weeks and answered it at length. I argued that, if you really believe that the situation portrayed in the documentary pre-

vails all over China and is the result of official policy, the solution is not to export a handful of children to an alien culture but to put pressure on the Chinese government. To exploit such a lamentable situation as a way of completing British families strikes me as wrong from every point of view. It would be extraordinary if serious inadequacies in child-care institutions could not be found within a peasant nation of a billion people. It would be equally extraordinary if the Chinese authorities had been delighted that foreigners had found them. What response could Chinese television producers expect to a request for permission to make a documentary on child abuse in English institutions? Would the Chinese have reason to argue that such abuse is institutionalised and condoned and universal? It certainly takes us a helluva long time to get around to doing it.

The orphans full of girl children are the result of the widespread implementation in China of the draconian one-child policy, which has only now begun to be condemned and that palely, because we want fewer Chinese even more passionately than the Chinese do. In 1984 I wrote in a largely misunderstood book called *Sex and Destiny* that "We do not wish to hear that Chinese policy is brutal because we need to feel secure in the certainty that we do not need to oppose it. Our support of drastic policies soils us by association and coarsens our understanding of what is meant by democracy." It is too late now to suggest that we could remedy the situation by adopting a few hundred unwanted girl babies. The Chinese have proved that they can perform miracles; the work of eradicating the historic preference for boy children will be done by the Chinese, if it is done at all.

Clearly, I shouldn't have bothered to explain my misgivings about the Dying Rooms Trust in a letter to Diana Holmes. My reward for this courtesy was to be pilloried as a "maverick" in an excruciatingly sensationalist double-page spread in the London *Evening Standard*, featuring an appalling picture of a naked, emaciated child at the point of death. If, as most of those approached by the trust probably did, I had biome the original letter and held my peace, I'd have saved time, energy, moxie and wear and tear upon the soul.

The tendency to exploit private correspondence for newspaper coverage is not limited to the harder edge of fund-raising. The average

painter has realised that a letter from a celebrity is money in the bank. A few weeks ago I had a letter from a disabled man who had written a novel, which he wanted me to help him to get published. I read the terrible stuff he sent, and answered him at once in the person of my assistant: "Dr Greer has asked me to return your print-out with her apologies. Any endorsement that Dr Greer would offer would have to imply that she considers your work to be of outstanding quality. She is sorry to have to say that in her honest opinion this is not the case. This is not by any means to say that it is unpublishable."

Even publishers don't return unsolicited manuscripts. From now on, I won't either. Then I won't get the letter telling me that the man is dead, and my "harsh and unkind words" to him will be reflected in the last letter he got and destined to be with all reactions from the 100 famous people he approached for help, as published in the newspapers.

That settles it. Bin, bin, bin. All those demands for funds to put deserving people through drama, law or art school, bin. All those beffuddled requests to explain what fuck-me shoes are, bin. All those 20-page hand-written screeds explaining the meaning of life, bin. All those reprimands for things I didn't say, bin, glorious bin. All those demands for my favourite poem, recipe, book, colour, into my big new shiny black garbage bin. No more filing and cross-referencing. I will save only the stamps for the hospital. No more queuing in the spectacularly inefficient post office. Calloo callay!

What is this conference madness that turns intelligent people into frothing cartoon characters?

No more seaside slapstick



ANDREW MARR
Columnist of the Year

There is poison in the air, some kind of intellectual pollution. Subtle British people are behaving like morons. I had been going to write a nice conventional piece about Michael Howard, on immigration, or something. But after three weeks of political conferences, their effect on the men and women I know is too disorientating, just too interesting, to be avoided.

The scene is a party, or a hotel room or a government office. In it, a clever, self-aware man is talking about the world, juggling pluses and minuses, arguing about the public good. This man is, well, Michael Portillo actually. Or Michael Howard. Or Peter Lilley. Or Michael Heseltine. Or almost any of them. Good conversations, real dilemmas.

Then they get up at a conference podium and become barely recognisable caricatures of themselves. Portillo is so offensive about Europe and the SAS that the Foreign Office has to placate continental governments and other ministers pretend out to have heard his speech so as to avoid saying anything about it. His reputation in Whitehall is rising; he has admirers across the political spectrum. But once a year he gets up at the conference and does his best to destroy it.

He is the most striking recent example, but they are all touched by the same disease. For 51 weeks a year, Lilley is a considerable thinker on social security issues, impartial and thoughtful. But take him to the seaside in October and he descends to gimmickry and jeers. Michael Howard works like a demon to disguise any hint of open-mindedness. Home Office policy is driven, it seems, by an insatiable appetite for tabloid-headline answers to things we all know are not so easy. The needs of conference come first, and lead to proposals attacked by the Lord Chief Justice as unjust.

Lord Chief Justices can be wrong. But crime has plagued us during the Conservative years. Home secretaries have told Tory conferences, year after year, that they have found the answer, and have failed, year after year, to deliver it. Neither the liberals nor the



Showtime: take them to the seaside in October and they descend into gimmickry and jeers

authoritarians have been convincing. You might have thought there would be some reflection of this history, even an explanation about why Howard rejected the separation-of-powers argument? Not a bit of it. This was written for instant applause, not for analysis.

As conference speeches are judged, Michael Heseltine's, like Michael Howard's, was undoubtedly a triumph. What do we mean by this? Again, out that he made us think, but that he succeeded in collapsing this subtle, fascinating country of ours into a Day-Glo cartoon for half an hour.

He jumped about, stabbed the air, belched headlines, fired cheap shots into the nation's living rooms. Yes, very good. A "triumph", no doubt. He said true things. But I cannot have been alone in finding the spectacle of a man of his age and intelligence doing pantomime a little demeaning.

All these people come to Blackpool, it seems, bent on persuading the country that they are worse, cruder, sillier than they really are. Why? What is meant to benefit from this?

Each day here we have walked through streets filled with poor people on holiday, people dressed badly, short of money and ill-looking, searching for fun. Then, once inside the conference capsule, we have heard the party pretending that Britain is a sunlit land of rich and self-confident

people, a place without shadows. The effect is surreal and it does not do the Tory cause much good.

Perhaps these blank simplicities are needed as an annual reward to the party faithful for cold nights huddled along suburban avenues with leaflets?

Once in the hall, the representatives also speak in stark headlines. Moist young men and grinning old ladies wildly applaud stale jokes against Labour. But one only needs to talk to them at fringe meetings, or in bars or restaurants, quickly to realise that they, too, are far subtler and more interesting than they appear when addressing the conference.

Talk about economics or the constitution, social security or the family, and they seem formidably informed, open-minded people. Often they are involved in local politics, or charities, or struggling businesses. We in the liberal press tend to sneer about them and patronise them; but they know more about the world than most journalists do - this one included.

These may seem points against the Conservatives, but they apply to the other parties, too. There have been numerous clever jokes, well-made rhetorical patterns and good news clips over the past three weeks from Labour, the Liberal Democrats and the SNP. But I do not think I have

heard a single speech that really attempted to engage in a difficult, complicated debate, argue aloud and send the audience away thinking harder than when they came in.

Colleagues, who have been coming to party conferences for longer than the decade I have, say that in the Fifties and Sixties leading politicians felt it part of their duty to educate conferences. If so, it has been forgotten. Conferences now seem to diminish almost anyone who comes into contact with them.

They perform other functions. They get politicians on to the news, though the deluge of announcements and specifying means most of what happens is not seen by the voters. They give the press a chance to judge the direction and morale of the parties; to find that the 1995 conference season has been excellent for Labour and less good, though not disastrous, for the Tories, is worth knowing. They kick-start the political year, help settle strategies, bind the party together, allow contacts to be made and friendships to be renewed.

They force ministers and shadow ministers to meet and talk to the bumbling people who work for them in the country. They enable ambitious, young, unknown people to grab the national spotlight. They have glorious moments of real drama. They are surrounded by amiable dinners and jolly

parties. For all those reasons, it would be ridiculous to be against party conferences as such.

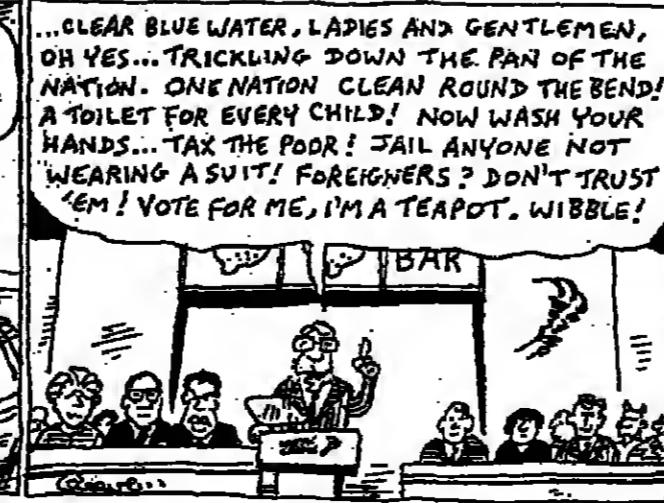
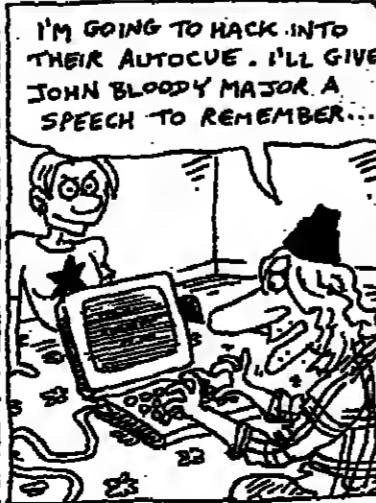
This is, rather, a bleat from the sidelines, a plea for politicians to rethink their attitude to these awful seaside weeks. The rhetorical tricks and phoney gimmicks of what are regarded as "good" conference speeches seem increasingly stale. They convey an impression of ministers and shadow ministers who are ignorant of their people, who feel that unless they keep it cheap and simple they will not be heard. It is not true. There is a hunger for seriousness.

Who will deliver it? Well, there is one politician who has already made a refreshing un-speech, pleading for grown-up politics and sounding in public just like his private self.

He said a year ago he wanted "an windy rhetoric, no facile phrases, no pinus clichés, no shallow simplification, no mock-honest, mock-familiar, ad-man's speak" and he derided "the glib phrases, the soundbites, the ritual confabulations" which obsess the political élite but bore normal people little fruit. That was John Major, speaking in Bournemouth last year. But in Blackpool, this year, we have had little else. He, too, has had to sit and grin through a sea of rubbish. When he performs today, I think we should judge him by his own good words.

by Tony Reeve and Steve Way

Generation Why



comment

Thatcher: the final challenge

It's Margaret Thatcher's birthday today. The best birthday present anyone could give her would be the leadership of the Tory party. She always wanted to be still leading the Tory party at the age of 70. In fact, she had already written the speech she would deliver to celebrate the occasion. Here it is, copied from her actual notes, as they are to be found on show in the Margaret Thatcher Foundation Travelling Exhibition:

Man says: "Pray silence for Margaret Thatcher!" I stand up. I quell the conference hall with a glance. I say: "My Lords, ladies and gentlemen..."

There is a gigantic ovation. I let it run for a minute or two then quell it with another glance. I glance at my notes, and then ostentatiously throw them away. I speak follows, from another set of notes which have already been left in the lecture for this very purpose...

"My Lords, ladies and gentlemen, I have now been leader of this great party for 20 years, and more. During that time we have seen it grow from an opposition party to a party in power, of power and with power!" Wait for round of applause here. Even though the mellifluous phrase means nothing. Sheep, the lot of them.

"During that time I have built the party into a monument to solidarity, loyalty and cohesion. Whatever we have wanted to do we have done. People said we could not regain the Falkland Islands. We did it! People said we could never tame the trade unions. We succeeded! They said we could never introduce a national lottery. They backed the wrong horse!"

Cheers and laughter here. If enough, maybe venture a joke along the lines of: "They said we could never do without Norman Tebbit. Norman who?" More cheers and laughter.

"During the time I have been at the helm of this great party of ours I have been accused of being anti-European. Nothing could be further from the truth. Why, single-handedly I have often had to keep the Mark afloat by myself..."

Puzzled silence here.

"I refer of course to my son, Mark." Chorus of delighted laughter.

"But there comes a time when even the most dedicated leader has to ask himself whether she has not fulfilled her task. After 20 years at the top, are there any challenges left? Would I not be happier if I simply left Westminster for a life of bucolic happiness?"

Horrified silence here. NB. Must look up meaning of bucolic.

"The straight answer to that is - No! I would be miserable! I need more challenges, not fewer! Ask any leader of a

grand enterprise how he feels when he has got that enterprise up and running, when he has ironed out the bumps and risks, when he is sailing at 70mph down the motorway of life. I will tell you how he feels. Bored!"

Uneasy silence.

"Therefore it is at this time that the leader takes up another challenge. He looks round for some other organisation that needs his or her input. He looks for some other body that is waiting for a kick-start so that he can start once again to fulfil his destiny as a leader."

You could hear a pin drop.

"Ladies and gentlemen, I have been looking round for such a challenge. I believe I have found it."

Slight pause to allow TV cameras to zoom in and refocus.

"Now, if I were ever to leave the Tory party, I know two things would happen. The first would be a spontaneous outbreak of grief conveying the message that I could never


MILES KINGTON
replaced. The second would be a stampede of Tory MPs attempting to replace me."

Laughter.

"But it is true! The Tory party is stuffed full of people who think they will or still can be the leader. We have nothing but potential leaders in our party. The only reason a Tory MP ever resigns is because he will have finally realised he will never be PM. If I were to leave, you would not be short of people who were better qualified than me."

"It is different in the Labour Party. The Labour Party distrusts leaders. It has always distrusted leaders, whether its own leaders or the leaders in the *Guardian* newspaper." Pause here to let joke sink in.

"In fact, the Labour Party would rather attack its own leader than the Tory leader. And given the calibre of Labour leaders in our lifetime, I am not surprised. And yet ... and yet ..."

An ominous silence.

"It is often said that Labour needs an experienced leader. It is very often said that Labour will win the next election. This is a very great challenge for Labour. It is also a very great challenge for me. Because I have come before you today to inform you that I intend to leave the Conservatives and join the Labour Party!"

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business

Takeover bids: A rash of activity generating huge corporate fees has led a scramble for office space in a boom reminiscent of the late 1980s

City firms profit from return of feelgood factor

JOHN EISENHAMMER and JOHN WILLCOCK

Boom-time beckons in the City again as corporate finance departments power towards a bumper year on a surge of big deals, and the property market enjoys a spurt of activity as expanding firms compete for bigger and better offices.

A year ago the corporate finance departments of City investment banks were struggling to make a contribution to group earnings. Now the whirlwind of takeovers and mergers is producing fat fees and expectations of even fatter bonuses. "1995 is already a vintage year, the corporate finance side is making money faster than it can count," one Rothschild executive said.

Acquisitions Monthly, the magazine, recently reported that the value of mergers and acquisitions deals this year is set to break the 1989 record.

"We are back to the pace of the late 1980s, and it is pretty sure to carry on for some while yet," says a Deutsche Morgan Grenfell executive. This dramatic recovery in investment banking from the trough of last year, together with a spurt of overseas banks moving to boost their representation in

London, has knocked-on to renewed activity at the top end of the City property market.

Retail agents letting space in the City have just raised their top rents from £2.50 to £2.50 per square foot, while rent-free periods for top-quality developments are coming right back, according to Mark Lethbridge, an associate in Richard Ellis's City agency department.

The decision by Deutsche Bank to take 300,000sq ft next to its Morgan Grenfell investment bank subsidiary in Winchester House, has been followed by other smaller firms. Allied Trust Bank has expanded its existing space in Cannon Bridge by 10,000sq ft,

Deal activity, which usually growth by UK banks and overseas banks already here, according to George Gillon, City partner with the agents Drivers Jones. "Since the summer there has been a surge of people in the financial sector - investment banks and overseas representative banks - who want more space," said Mr Gillon.

J Henry Schroder Wag, the corporate finance arm of Schroders, has recently taken an additional 40,000sq ft in TSB's old head office in Milk Street, he said. American investment

while Sanwa Bank has added 6,000sq ft at City Place House, said Mr Lethbridge.

All these deals have been for top-quality offices, reflecting the renewed confidence of investment banks boosted by better trading earnings and the big rewards for huge deals. In the just completed Lloyds-TSB merger, the two sets of main advisers, Baring Brothers and J.P. Morgan, are expected to earn over £5m apiece. Baring, which was bankrupted earlier this year before being rescued by ING of the Netherlands, is likely to be among the M & A leaders in this year's league table, thanks to big deals like Lloyds and Glaxo-Wellcome.

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Hitting the right number: Credit Suisse's dealing room in the City

bank JP Morgan had taken more space in its Aldgate offices while UK merchant bank Close Brothers has moved to a new head office.

Mr Gillon said that information providers and medium-sized legal practices were also benefiting from the recovery in City business generally. Thomson Financial Services is taking more space in the Aldgate offices it moved to last year, while at least four law firms are looking for space.

The City of London Corporation is fearful that it will lose

the large overseas investment banks currently looking for space at Canary Wharf, since there is an acute shortage of modern, large office buildings in the City. In particular, the investment banks seeking to move are looking for premises with football field-sized spaces for dealing floors. There is a shortage of poor-grade buildings, which will probably never be let again and urgently need redeveloping.

Mr Lethbridge pointed out that there is 6.36 million square feet of vacant office space in the City, or 9.5 per cent of all existing office buildings. This compares to just 2 per cent in the boom years of the late 1980s and up to 16 per cent in the depths of the recession.

Less than half this vacant space consists of buildings that would be considered "grade A", Mr Gillon said. Nevertheless the German banks that together have decided to make London the home of their investment banking operations are determined to stay in the City - even if this means building their own offices, he said.

The trailblazer was Deutsche

Bank in the summer. It decided to build its own 300,000sq ft head office next to its recently acquired subsidiary Morgan Grenfell in Winchester Avenue. It's determined hiring to build up the investment banking operations - some 80 people have been taken on since the beginning of the year, many from Warburgs - has contributed to another phenomenon, a surge in pay.

Rival banks are beginning to complain vociferously of the way the rash of cheque-book poaching is helping to push up remuneration levels.

Photograph: Glynn Griffiths

Mergers & Acquisitions

Financial adviser to UK deals (Jan-Sep 1995)

Rank	Company	Value (£m)
1	Barings	1,070
2	Robert Fleming	625
3	LM Rothschild	543
4	HSBC	514
5	Goldman Sachs	322
6	Deutsche Morgan Grenfell	223
7	Kellogg Benson	122
8	HSBC Warburg	102
9	100	62
10	11	52
11	12	42

Source: Financial Adviser

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Provident reveals £25m takeover inducement

NIC CICUTTI

More than 200,000 policyholders with Provident Mutual were told yesterday how much they will get in return for agreeing to a takeover by General Accident.

They were among investors in the life assurance company - based at Stevenage, Herts - sent details of the £25m bonus payments agreed with the Scottish insurer last month.

General Accident's offer is part of an overall £170m deal aimed at adding Provident Mutual to its own group of companies. Before it can do so, it must win the approval of at least 75 per cent of Provident's policyholders voting at a general meeting in November. Proxy votes are also allowed.

Provident Mutual payouts

New policyholders		Expected bonus
£50	£50	£100
£100	£100	£200
£150	£150	£300
Yearly bonus, started 1993		Expected bonus
£50	£50	£75
£100	£100	£125
£150	£150	£225
£200	£200	£300

Source: Provident Mutual. Figures are estimates based on 200,000 new policyholders and 200,000 existing policyholders.

Bancorp's value gets a boost

JOHN EISENHAMMER
Financial Editor

NatWest Group's negotiations to sell its US retail banking operations were boosted yesterday by a 4.1 per cent rise in pre-tax profits at Bancorp to \$33.7m (£22.5m) for the first nine months from \$24.0m a year before. NatWest is looking for more than £2.5bn from the sale of New Jersey-based Bancorp group.

Bancorp posted lower net income for the nine months to 30 September, at \$18.5m compared with \$21.5m in the same period of 1994. The bank said the fall reflected the inclusion of a full Federal income tax provision in 1995 following the utilisation of tax-offsetting benefits in the previous three years.

John Igwe, NatWest Bancorp's chairman and chief executive, who is the highest-paid man in the group, earning last year a total of £1.5m, said: "These achievements combined with our expanded marketplace presence have enhanced the value of the NatWest Bancorp franchise."

NatWest has decided to take advantage of the current spate of big retail banking mergers and takeovers in the US to cash in on Bancorp at what it hopes will be a full price.

Exchange holds up pay rules

PETER RODGERS
Business Editor

The Stock Exchange yesterday bowed to pressure from industry and delayed full implementation of the Greenbury Code on top pay, because of difficulties in framing some of the rules.

Provisions to force companies to seek shareholder approval for long-term incentive schemes were among those put off until next year for further consultation.

Other measures delayed were the new rules that phase the granting of options, a ban on the issue of options at a discount, and the recommendation that the full value of directors' pension entitlements is disclosed.

The decision follows protests from companies about what some claim was the high-handed way the exchange put out draft changes to the listing rules - the Yellow Book - at the end of July, inviting comments on relatively minor variations only.

The exchange said it had received 170 replies to the consultative document and had revised its proposals to reflect them.

As well as the details of some new rules being delayed until the first quarter of next year, those that have been agreed will not now come into effect until 31 December, rather than the

planned date of the end of this month, to give companies time to familiarise themselves with the requirements.

The new rules that have been agreed - and published as an official revision of the Yellow Book - force companies to increase the disclosure of directors' earnings, as the Greenbury committee recommended.

They also oblige companies to make a statement of compliance with the Greenbury recommendation that remuneration committees should be given a new independence - a sensitive area because the Greenbury report could lead to the creation for the first time of a separate class of directors on company boards, with their own responsibilities.

Company law states that all directors have equal responsibility for running a company. One company chairman said the changes could amount to the first step towards establishing supervisory boards in Britain.

The rules in the revised Yellow Book also oblige companies to make a statement of full consideration has been given to the best practice provisions on remuneration policy, service contracts and compensation.

Another consultative document will be issued at the end of the month.



COMMENT

"If Mr Clarke is to do more than tease the country when he delivers the Budget, he had better be right about inflation being under control."

Clarke's luck with prices may be running out

While the Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, "couldn't possibly comment" on the near certainty of a tax-cutting Budget, he was quick to say something at yesterday's Conservative Party conference about the extremely disappointing inflation figures for September, which he blamed largely on the effect of a hot summer on food prices. Inflation, he claimed, remained under control.

If Mr Clarke is to do more than tease the country when he delivers the Budget, he had better be right. Lower than expected inflation has been vital in allowing him to squeeze public spending plans. It has meant that wage inflation has remained low, making the public sector pay-bill freeze much easier to implement.

The cost of getting it wrong is graphically illustrated by the impact of the September inflation figure on social security expenditure. With inflation at almost 4 per cent rather than the 3 per cent projected at the time of the last Budget, the Chancellor now has to find an extra £650m to uprate social security benefits to take account of inflation. If inflation continued to worsen, this could lay the ground for a pick-up in pay inflation next year, which would knock through to the public sector.

It is, however, still too early to conclude that the game is up on retail price inflation, which has tended to surprise this year by coming in below expectations. Although a rise in seasonal food prices accounted for a quarter of the jump in the inflation rate, the

main drive came from an attempt by retailers to rebuild their margins.

We have been here before. So far, consumer resistance to higher prices has largely prevailed. The Confederation of British Industry's distributive trades survey for September suggests that consumers are continuing to punish retailers for their attempt to push up prices by withholding their custom. For all his slip-ups, Kenneth Clarke has been a lucky Chancellor so far. His luck may hold but he will be watching next week's retail sales figures as anxiously as anyone.

North West's strategy is seriously flawed

It is always possible that Sir Desmond Pitcher, chairman of North West Water, will prove the rest of us wrong but it seems unlikely. While there have certainly been more seriously flawed takeovers than North West Water's bid for Norweb, there have not been many in the £1.8bn league. The best that North West shareholders can expect from the high price being exacted for this Lancastrian *folie de grandeur* is that one and one will end up equaling two; much more likely it will equal a good deal less. The ease with which North West has hoovered up nearly 30 per cent of Norweb's share capital shows the market's strong preference in this case for cash over shares. You do not have to probe very far to find out why.

To make matters worse, North West may have been forced to overpay for Norweb. It is to be hoped that the now almost universal perception of this deal – that it is being driven primarily by fees and ego – is wrong. Sir Desmond and his team are going to have to work hard to overcome it, however. A windfall utilities tax, by this Government or

Forget all the talk about synergies. It is delusion to believe they can possibly exist between water and electricity companies. If there is commercial merit to this takeover it is to do with cost-cutting, cash flow and tax, not industrial logic. Deals done purely for tax reasons are nearly always bad ones; the tax rules can be changed. As for the match between the cash generating attributes of an electricity company and the cash needs of a water company, it remains to be seen how this will survive the effects of the last review of electricity tariff controls.

That leaves cost-cutting, where the scope is clearly considerable. North West's record, however, hardly inspires confidence that it is up to the task. The spanking new £350m computerised billing system North West is so keen to promote, is in fact, nothing to boast about. It is an IT white elephant with few redeeming features. Like all IT, it is unlikely to be easily adaptable to dealing with the entirely different and more complex billing system that is used by the electricity industry. The scope for costly cock-ups in putting in place the combined facilities management company is substantial.

To make matters worse, North West may have been forced to overpay for Norweb. It is to be hoped that the now almost universal perception of this deal – that it is being driven primarily by fees and ego – is wrong. Sir Desmond and his team are going to have to work hard to overcome it, however. A windfall utilities tax, by this Government or

the next, would seal its fate as one of the most ill-judged and ill-conceived takeovers of the present merger boom.

Why no word on the nuclear sale?

Few would disagree that nuclear and rail are the dogs of the Government's privatisation programme. One barked with joy this week, after Sir George Young, the Transport Secretary, announced the Railtrack sale would definitely go ahead in the spring. The other stayed conspicuously silent. Not a word of the nuclear sale was mentioned in the conference speech by Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade and the minister responsible.

This could be no more than an oversight, or perhaps it reflects the Government's rough indication a few months ago that it would like the nuclear sale to go ahead next summer. Why say more at this stage? On the other hand, if Sir George dared boast at the party conference that he was determined to push through something as unpopular as the rail sale – once dubbed the poll tax on wheels – why is Mr Lang not barking as loudly?

The nuclear companies are unaware of any change of timetable and perhaps there is none, as yet. The sale of British Energy, as it is called, requires a complex merger of two firms and the separation from the organisation of the Magnox reactors, under terms still being argued through with British

Nuclear Fuels, their prospective (and reluctant) new owner.

Does silence indicate that the Government, too, is wondering whether it can pull off the nuclear sale? If it slips as little as three months into the autumn the risk of becoming snared up in an election campaign will be enormous. The market will not be in the mood to buy something so suspect at poll-taking time, and the less the electorate has to be reminded of nuclear power at the hustings the better.

Railtrack is now looking rather different. The City remains deeply sceptical about the company, which is reliant for its income on indirect subsidies funnelled through the train operators that use its services. But Sir George really means to push it through. As the seller, the Government has the whip hand. Not only can it adjust the price and the debt levels to smarten up Railtrack for City consumption, it could also, if pressed, offer guarantees against the costs of changes in regulation and taxation, to offset some of the uncertainty Labour is generating with its threats of renationalisation. Such pledges have already been made to bidders for rail franchises.

The odds are that Railtrack will go through, albeit on terms so generous that it will make even the great regional electricity company giveaway look reasonable by comparison. But it is going to take the re-election of John Major to get nuclear into the private sector.

Manweb directors enjoy £3-4m payoff bonanza after takeover

MARY FAGAN
Industrial Correspondent

Directors of Manweb, the regional firm taken over last week by Scottish Power after a fierce battle, left the company with payoffs estimated to be worth between £3m and £4m. The main beneficiary is thought to be John Roberts, Manweb's chief executive, who gains more than £1m from termination of his two-year rolling contract, share options and shares.

As the final chapter of Manweb's struggle closed, Texas Energy Partners withdrew its bid for another regional firm, Norweb, after a knockout £1.8bn bid on Wednesday by rival North West Water. It was now believed to be preparing to launch a fresh bid for another electricity company.

Scottish Power, which by last Friday night owned or had acceptances in respect of 61 per

cent of Manweb's shares, has replaced Mr Roberts with Mike Kindz, one of its own directors. Ian Robinson, Scottish Power's chief executive, becomes chairman of Manweb.

Mr Robinson called on all remaining Manweb shareholders to accept the £1.1bn offer – worth £9.90 per share – which has now been recommended by the outgoing board. But the Scottish group is thought to be surprised at the amount of money it has had to pay to the former directors of the electricity firm.

City analysts continued to speculate over which electricity company would be the next to fall. Texas Energy, a partnership between Houston Industries and Centra South West, is known to have a shortlist of favoured targets. One industry source said: "They will analyse their options. The pressure to move is that these re-

gional firms are a dying breed. They are becoming extinct."

Texas Energy said: "North West Water's further increased offer valued at £1.70 is at a level where we see no merit for our shareholders to compete for Norweb. We wish the shareholders, customers and em-

ployees of Norweb and North West Water well."

Tom Shockley, co-chairman of Texas, said that the partners continue to believe in the rationale underlying the bid for Norweb, which at one point had been favoured by the electrici-

ty firm's board. The Takeover Panel gave Texas Energy permission to withdraw without having issued its offer document, which industry sources said will allow it more flexibility in coming back with a different bid.

Shares in London Electricity jumped by 29p to 97.27 as City analysts singled it out as the likeliest alternative for the US group or for a bid from Thames Water. There was also speculation that Yorkshire Electricity could fall prey to either Iberas or to GEC.

North West Water, whose £1.70 per share offer has been criticised in the City as "very overpriced", yesterday took its stake in Norweb to 29.9 per cent.

The company will seek shareholder approval for the acquisition at an Extraordinary General Meeting in Manchester today.

Unions attacked the plans to

merge North West with Norweb, predicting that thousands of jobs will go. Unison, the public sector union, plans to lobby the EGM, dressed as "fat cats", under the banner: "Public service out private sleaze".

A union spokesman said that the takeover would benefit only directors and large shareholders rather than customers. North West has admitted that the takeover will not feed through to lower bids for water customers for several years.

One City analyst warned of the regulatory and political risks facing the enlarged group, which will now be subject to price controls and scrutiny by two watchdogs. Offer and Ofwat.

Earlier this week Jack Cunningham, Labour's trade and industry spokesman, demanded the entire electricity industry be referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

Montagu to pay £170m in B&C settlement

JOHN WILLCOCK
Financial Correspondent

Samuel Montagu, the merchant bank owned by HSBC, is to pay £160m plus £10m costs in an out-of-court settlement to the administrators of British & Commonwealth, the crashed financial conglomerate built up by John Gunn in the 1980s.

This represents the UK's biggest single payment on record to creditors of a bust company.

Sir William Purves, chairman of HSBC, intervened personally to engineer a settlement of the complex "Quadrex" litigation which has dragged on for seven years.

The deal clears the way for a

payout by the administrators of a further £227m, representing 15p in the pound to creditors of B&C Holdings and 5p in the pound to those of B&C Group Finance.

The administrators, Stephen Adamson of Ernst & Young and Peter Phillips of Buchler Phillips, are in the process of distributing a total of £1.25bn.

The biggest creditor is Law Debenture Corporation, which is trusted to a number of pension fund investments. Others owed large sums include Barclays, Midland, Royal Bank of Scotland, Credit Lyonnais and Chase Manhattan.

The case, concerned the aborted sale of B&C's money-brokering division to Quadrex in 1987.

Mr Gunn, now no longer

connected with B&C, agreed to sell the moneyp-brokering side to Quadrex, then run by American entrepreneur Gary Klesch. Following the collapse of stockmarkets in October 1987 Quadrex pulled out of the deal, and B&C then sued the company and the adviser on the deal, Samuel Montagu. B&C claimed that the merchant bank had underwritten the deal, while the bank denied this.

B&C then lost £500m over the disastrous acquisition of Atlantic Computers – still the subject of litigation. B&C went into administration in 1990 with debts of £1bn. Mr Phillips was appointed co-administrator and took over the legal case against



Hill Samuel, Quadrex had since collapsed, leaving nothing to sue. Yesterday's settlement was welcomed by Mr Phillips as "brilliant news" but leaves a number of remaining problems. Mr Gunn is still facing disqualification proceedings as a director by the Department of Trade and Industry. And the administrators are fighting a £15m legal claim by the Inland Revenue concerning the sale of Teletype by B&C in 1985.

The administrators are also

suing BZW, the investment bank owned by Barclays, and Spicer & Oppenheim, an accountancy firm now part of Touche Ross, for well over £500m.

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business

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

Edited by TOM STEVENSON

Etam wearing its shaky look

Etam's shares have already halved over the past year, so yesterday's 15p fall to 13p was a clear indication of the market's growing concerns about the women'swear manufacturer. Having ditched most of its board and spelled out a four-point "programme for change" it would be tempting to see the company as another retail recovery story. Perhaps - our advice to bar-gain hunters remains to think twice.

Half-year losses of £3.85m included a one-off £2.98m reorganisation charge but, even stripping it out, there was a £660,000 loss from sales of £107m, compared with last year's £25.5m return from sales of £113m. While the company is focusing on reducing costs and increasing efficiency, the element of the profit equation that really matters - taking shoppers' money - is heading the wrong way fast.

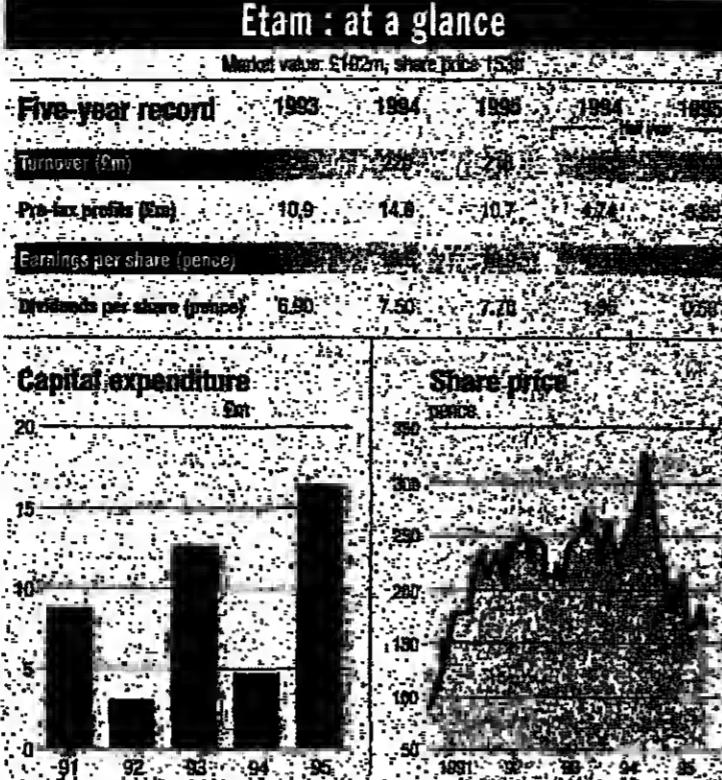
Etam's four-part plan includes establishing a strong management structure, beefing up its tired product lines and improving the appearance of the stores, rationalising the information technology and management reporting systems, and cutting costs. If that sounds a little like re-building the whole business, it is.

What worries analysts, however, is that, unlike say Laura Ashley, Etam has never been a particularly badly run business. It is not clear that there is enough scope for variable cost savings to make a serious difference.

The costs that really do need to be reined in are, unfortunately, fixed. Like Rayners, Pentos and Next in its darkest hour in 1991, Etam suffers from a worryingly high ratio of rent to sales, an overhead it can do little to reduce while continuing to trade.

The only way of reducing the ratio is to increase sales. The only way of doing that is to redefine Etam's target audience away from cash-strapped young working girls who have traditionally bought their office clothes from the shop and are now taking their custom to more exciting outlets. Next is back as a serious competitor, as is Bhs, which is taking business away and making pricing strategies extremely difficult to judge.

Etam was frank about prospects yesterday. There has been no improvement in trading since the last of this year's string of profits warnings and the signs are that pre-tax profits, £10.2m last year, might be as low as £2m this time. With a sharply cut interim dividend pointing to a big reduction at the full-year stage, the shares don't even have any yield support. Despite their precipitous decline over the past 12 months they have further to fall.



Future set fair at David Brown

David Brown, once better known for its tractors and Aston Martin sports cars, is today rapidly re-establishing the engineering business on which it was founded in the last century. The formerly family-owned company owes its renaissance to the 1990 buyout that brought in two former FKI executives to lead the management of the group.

The record since then has been impeccable, with profits rising from £3.85m in 1991 to £12.5m last year, and a half-way result to July show no sign of any let-up - the pre-tax figure is up 15 per cent to £6.57m.

Despite the rights issue at 205p that accompanied May's move to mop up the remaining David Brown family-owned engineering companies, underlying earnings per share have moved up 12 per cent to 7.4p. The company is holding to its forecast that the domestic market, which has been cut from 70 per cent five years ago to just 16 per cent now - just as well, as

hancing in a full year. A reorganisation should see margins, now around 7 per cent, lifted closer to the group average of over 10.

More of a disappointment in the half year was the heavy pump business, which saw profits dive 35 per cent on sales down 39 per cent. Management blames the timing of sales and technical specification changes by its Far Eastern customers, but with record order books and recent strong trading it is cautiously optimistic of making up the lost ground in the second half.

Another historic under-performer, the Radicon industrial gearbox manufacturer, is responding well to the introduction of new ranges and a £3m investment programme will double capacity over the next 12 months.

Future group sales are almost completely underwritten by order books now standing at an all-time high of £13.2m. Added protection is derived from Brown's lessening dependence on the domestic market, which has been cut from 70 per cent five years ago to just 16 per cent now - just as well, as

the latest industry survey points to a further slowdown in growth.

Profits of £15m before an expected £1m reorganisation provision this year would put the shares, unchanged at 220p, on a prospective multiple of just under 14. About right.

Tunnel is a black spot for BAA

BAA confirmed the perversity of market yesterday, rising 13p to 482p on worse-than-expected September traffic figures and a profits downgrade from UBS, the broker. As usual it has made sense to sell on the expectation of bad news and buy once it is confirmed.

Actually, the 3.4 per cent rise in passenger numbers in September compared with the same month last year disguised strong growth from most of the routes using BAA's seven airports. The fly in the ointment was European flights, which grew by only 1.2 per cent, clobbered by the popularity of the Channel Tunnel rail routes to Paris and Brussels.

As a result, UBS cut its pre-tax forecast for the year to March by £20m to £410m. It wiped a similar amount off the year's forecast, now pencilled in at £460m.

The shares bounced partly out of relief that the traffic numbers and downgrade were no worse. Over the past three months, the shares have underperformed the rest of the market by 7 per cent. Over the past month they have slipped almost a tenth from 532p, lagging the market by a similar margin.

Long-term, the outlook is still bright for the airport operator cum retailer. It enjoys highly reliable income from both its main activities, volumes are likely to remain buoyant as the airlines fight tooth and nail for market share, slashing prices in the process, and BAA's market remains attractively wealthy and captive.

A large slug of the company's income comes from duty-free retailing, where it enjoys gross margins of perhaps 70 per cent. It is little wonder that the shares have been such strong performers over a longer time frame.

On a prospective price/earnings ratio of 14 to March 1997, the share stand at a small premium to the rest of the market but are much less highly rated than usual. After their recent weakness they remain attractive.

Simon Pincombe CITY DIARY

Is there life after a hedge fund fortune?



Photograph: New York Times

Michael Steinhardt: New York is betting he will be back

The sudden retirement of Michael Steinhardt, the hugely wealthy hedge fund manager, hasn't exactly shaken Wall Street to its foundations. The portly 54-year-old financier has been threatening to "do something important with his life" for the last 15 years. The question on the lips of Manhattan's elite is whether he can do it without making a mess of it.

While Mr Steinhardt finds little difficulty in making lorry-loads of money (investors in the world's third-largest hedge fund have seen a return of 24.3 per cent a year over the last 28 years), he has struggled with his other pursuits.

He last retired 17 years ago, travelling to Israel to cultivate his spiritual life.

There he began collecting antique synagogues, boxes and returned to the US with more than 100 of the icons. Tragically, many of them proved to be fake.

Attempts to provide a bird sanctuary on his estate for the American steamer duck were equally unsuccessful. He built the lake. He built the island. But the ducks showed not the slightest interest in landing there.

Don't be surprised if the Labour Party suddenly pops up on the share register of National Westminster Bank. Douglas Hurd starts his new job as deputy chairman of NatWest Markets on Monday and his service contract will be available for inspection at the bank's headquarters.

One of the more interesting nuggets to be unearthed will be the salary paid to the former Foreign Secretary. Unhappily, the much-sought-after document will only be available to shareholders.

As yet no information is available on Mr Hurd's new office, other than that it will be on the prestigious ninth floor. Details on the colour of the carpets, type of desk and that sort of thing are not being divulged. Mr Hurd took his non-executive seat on bank's main board on Wednesday.

The Rensburg defections appear to have been sparked by the sudden departure of top dog Roger Mills. There followed an "either he stays or we go" ultimatum from the troops. He didn't and neither did they.

But the bloodbath does not stop there. Brown Shipley has defected to Harris Aliday and Greig Middleton is looking to repair an 11-man hole following a defection to Brewin Dolphin. Oh, and Henderson Crosthwaite is looking to start up.

Richard Holloway, linguist, cricketer and crutch, mouthpiece of the recently swallowed SG Warburg, has found a home with the Maitland Consultancy. But the news has not been greeted warmly at Lowe Bell, the agency that took over the PR for the enlarged SBC-Warburg. "It's a bit like the Prince of Wales becoming a warden in the Royal parks," sniffs one.

Some friction possibly? Allies point out that Angus Maitland's firm has some very good clients, including Mercury Asset Management and the SBC Warburg fund management arm.

Yesterday's conflagration at the headquarters of Rupert Murdoch's Australian newspaper operations - coming so shortly after dire warnings on the rising cost of newsprint - is nothing more than a coincidence, we can report. Fire officials said there were no suspicious circumstances.

The great man watched the blaze from the safety of a car park, having stayed long enough "to make sure the staff were OK".

Time Products in good tick

MAGNUS GRIMOND

Time Products, the watches and handbags distributor, yesterday painted a rosy picture of the future as it reported a strong opening half to the year.

The chairman, Marcus Mar-

guiles, said that he viewed the future with confidence as the group continued to focus on brand enhancement and concentrate its efforts on areas that would provide long-term growth for the company.

The luxury watch operations

in the UK and US - which have expanded rapidly in recent years - had shown more growth, the chairman said. "Our Judith Leiber division in the US has made further satisfactory progress. The new collection of Judith Leiber fashion jeweller has been well received."

In 1993, Time paid 17p (£10.5m) for Leiber, which makes handbags retailing at between \$2,000 and \$3,000 each. The plan at the time of the acquisition was to use Leiber to launch an international luxury goods business based on women's accessories.

His comments accompanied half-way figures to July showing pre-tax profits up 18 per cent to £5.54m, taking earnings per share from 5.85p to 7.02p. The interim dividend is raised 7.7 per cent to 3.5p. Turnover advanced from £37.2m to £38.6m, while operating profits rose from £4.55m to £5.40m.

Time Products' 17.8m (£1.25m) quarterly profit is in line.

United Energy builds platform to recovery

MARY FAGAN

Industrial Correspondent

United Energy, formerly known as Falcon Resources, made a post-tax profit of £35.000m in the first half of the year, compared with a loss of £19.3m in the same period last year. The company, whose main operations are the development and production of oil and gas interests in the US and Europe, increased its turnover to £1.58m in the six months to 30 June, from £1.20m a year ago.

The United chairman, John Billington, said the company had a strong platform on which to continue to develop the business in the oil, gas and wider energy sectors. He was optimistic that the progress made in the first half could be built on - group production was about

double that of this time last year and at record levels.

The Woodbine and Renown properties have been integrated successfully into the existing portfolio in the US and we have identified areas with potential for increased production and/or reduced operating costs with the intention of implementing these improvements prior to the year end," he said.

In addition, the company had significant interests in two fields that it believed were potential candidates for water-flooding - a technique in which water is swept through a field, pushing the oil ahead of it in the hopes of enhancing recoverable reserves. But the reserves attributable to these had yet to be included in the mid-year reserves pending further engineering evaluation, he said.

The company sold 1,089 houses in the year to June, against 949 the previous year, but the squeeze on margins meant that profits before tax for the year were up a modest 13 per cent at £7.05m, compared with £6.2m last year.

The company said its average selling price remained similar to last year at just under £70,000 with a part-exchange scheme being used for a quarter of sales. First-time homes accounted for 42 per cent of output.

John Maunders, the North-West and South of England house-builder, said its margins were under attack as it strove to tempt house purchasers back into the market.

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John Maunders, chairman, does not expect a significant change in market conditions. "It is unrealistic to assume any dramatic change in the market in the short term, but through our marketing incentives we will be able to achieve our targets in the current half, although margins are under pressure."

"Low inflation and interest rates mean the climate has never been better for house buyers," Mr Maunders said, "but there is just a general lack of confidence among potential buyers."

The final dividend is in-

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3,523.8 +49.5

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3,936.4 +16.6

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SEAO: VOLUME
744.1m shares

30,518 bargains

Glits: Index
92.6 -6.03

SHARE SPOTLIGHT

share price: 1,000

Market Rank of Securities

100

900

800

700

600

500

400

300

200

100

0

Bunzl takes its turn as the popular takeover target

The takeover rumours that have infested sector after sector yesterday spread to paper and packaging and homed in on Bunzl, which reversed a fall in early trading to close 2p higher at 193p on speculation that International Paper of the US may mount a bid.

Almost 2 million Bunzl shares were traded, although a large part of the volume was said to be the tail-end of a sell order from an institutional investor.

Bunzl's shares have recovered steadily following the plunge to 55p during the height of the recession. At yesterday's closing price, Bunzl is worth more than £350m. The company is now in rude health, a reflection of the clear-out of a hotch-potch of businesses by Tony Habgood since he became chief executive in 1991.

Despite the success of Mr Habgood's strategy and the ac-

companying surge in the share price over the last four years, however, the company is trading on a price earnings multiple of 12.9, which is below the market average of 13.6.

The main attraction for International Paper, dealers said, would be the company's commanding position in America for supplying packaging to supermarkets.

One dealer said that any move by International Paper could well raise the acquisitive sights of Jefferson Smurfit, the Irish company which has spent the last 20 years buying its way to pole position in the world league for paper and board makers. Shares in Jefferson Smurfit rose 7p to 157p. The Bunzl bid rumour was just one of dozens that sent share prices soaring. Even worse-than-expected inflation figures were only a minor irritant for a market that is convinced that the continuing spat of

takeovers will be capped by the mother of all deals.

The speculative list of takeover targets is now so long that it is surprising that the actuarial profession has not devised a separate index to track their progress. Volume trading was good, with almost 750 million shares traded. There were more than 30,000 bargains.

Trading in shares and options of Grand Metropolitan, the international food and drinks group, was particularly heavy amid further rumours that Kohlberg Kravis Roberts, the American leveraged buyout specialist, was considering a break-up bid. GrandMet is

basically made up of three parts: the IDV drinks business, which is one of the biggest in the world; the Burger King fast-food operation; and food, which encompasses Pillsbury, Pet and Green Giant.

GrandMet's shares climbed 14p to 441p, which values the company at around £9.7bn. More than 1,500 call option contracts, each covering 1 million shares at 50p each, were struck on the November series.

Continued excitement over the Lloyds Bank merger with TSB pushed Royal Bank of Scotland's shares 19p higher to 502p. The shares already traded at a premium to the banking sector, principally due to

RBS's profits powerhouse, and NatWest gained 9p to 621p. Traders believe that the eventual buyer will have to pay more than £400m for the controlling 75 per cent stake owned by Banque Indosuez.

Henderson Administration gained 11p to 1,224p, Invesco added 5p to 226p, and Persimmon advanced 35p to 1,740p, with investors convinced that the loser in the fight for Gartmore will launch a strike against another fund management group.

More than 10 million shares were dealt in RBS, and trading in Abbey National topped 9 million. A key 23 per cent of RBS is owned by just two shareholders - Banco Santander of Spain with 10 per cent and Mercury Asset Management with 13 per cent.

Gartmore shot up another 13p to a year's high of 289p amid strong speculation that the fund management group would be under new management by the end of next week. BAT Industries, the financial services and tobacco group, is tipped as one of the main suitors, along with National Westminster bank. Shares in BAT

firmed 2p to 546p, and NatWest gained 9p to 621p.

Traders believe that the eventual buyer will have to pay more than £400m for the controlling 75 per cent stake owned by Banque Indosuez.

Henderson Administration gained 11p to 1,224p, Invesco added 5p to 226p, and Persimmon advanced 35p to 1,740p, with investors convinced that the loser in the fight for Gartmore will launch a strike against another fund management group.

The media pitch was awash with rumours. Telegraph closed 6p higher at 436p despite denials from Pearson, up 3p to 611p, that it was considering a bid. There was gossip in late trading that Conrad Black would tighten his control over the Telegraph by splashing out £30m for a further 5 per cent of the shares. He already controls 58.5 per cent of the stock.

Shares in Unipalm increased 11p to 425p as rumours swirled that a counter-bid was on the way, possibly from the Dutch KPN telecoms group. The rumours came just a day after UUNET of the US made an agreed \$97m bid for Unipalm, recently caught up in controversy after it said a bid would be made at considerably below the prevailing 600p market price. KPN is said to have approached Unipalm earlier this year but was firmly rebuffed.

Oxford Molecular, the pharmaceuticals group, fired a penny to 196p shortly before the close on some talk that it was close to doing some more joint venture deals in the wake of the recent tie-ups with Glaxo Wellcome and Perkin Elmer in the US.

MARKET REPORT

JOHN SHEPHERD

takeovers will be capped by the mother of all deals.

The speculative list of

takeovers is now so long

that it is surprising that the

actuarial profession has not

devised a separate index to

track their progress. Volume

trading was good, with almost

750 million shares traded.

There were more than 30,000

bargains.

Trading in shares and options

of Grand Metropolitan, the

international food and

drinks group, was particularly

heavy amid further rumours

that Kohlberg Kravis Roberts,

the American leveraged buy-

out specialist, was considering

a break-up bid. GrandMet is

basically made up of three

parts: the IDV drinks business,

which is one of the biggest in

the world; the Burger King

fast-food operation; and food,

which encompasses Pillsbury,

Pet and Green Giant.

GrandMet's shares climbed

14p to 441p, which values the

company at around £9.7bn.

More than 1,500 call option

contracts, each covering 1 mil-

lion shares at 50p each, were

struck on the November series.

Continued excitement over

the Lloyds Bank merger with

TSB pushed Royal Bank of

Scotland's shares 19p higher to

502p. The shares already traded

at a premium to the banking

sector, principally due to

RBS's profits powerhouse,

and NatWest gained 9p to 621p.

Traders believe that the

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pay more than £400m for the

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SHARE PRICE DATA

Prices are in sterling except where stated. The yield is last year's dividend, grossed up by 20 per cent, as a percentage of the share price. The price/earnings (P/E) ratio is the share price divided by last year's earnings per share, excluding exceptional items. Other details: ex Rights x Ex dividend u Unlisted Securities Market Suspended PE Partly Paid per N/P Paid Shares.

Source: Finra.

THE INDEPENDENT INDEX

The index allows you to access real-time share prices by phone from Senvi. Simply dial 0891 123 333, followed by the 4-digit code printed next to each share. To access the latest financial reports dial 0891 123 333 followed by one of the two-digit codes below.

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Harayir displays Hern durability

Racing

RICHARD EDMONDSON

HARAYIR woo the Challenge Stakes at Newmarket yesterday to set up what would be, without a shadow of a doubt, the most deserved success in the Breeders' Cup later this month.

The estimable filly may now be the avenger at Belmont Park for Willie Carson, Dick Hern and Sheikh Hamdan Al Maktoum, who probably still sit both upright in the dead of night at the memory of Dayjur's performance in New York five years ago, when the colt jetisoned certain victory by jumping the shadow of the stand.

If hardness is to be the key to the Breeders' Cup Mile, then Harayir can easily be envisaged with the winner's garland across her thick shoulders. The daughter of Gutch, who beat Soviet Line by half a length yesterday, opened her seasonal account in the 1,000 Guineas over the Rowley Mile in May, and yesterday's success on the same course was her fourth Group race victory of the year.

It was also further proof of Dick Hern's training endurance. Every time that followers of the sport expect Hern to wheel himself into the sunset he comes up with yet another talented standard-bearer. Hern delights in Harayir's achievements and versatility and expects even more from her. "Harayir has won over seven furlongs and a mile and is not bad over six furlongs either," he said yesterday.

"She ran at the Craven meeting in mid-April and it is now mid-October and she's still going. She's a joy to train."

"We will have to see what Sheikh Hamdan says, but if the ground is right and looks like being on top, there must be a possibility she will run in the Breeders' Cup Mile."

"A lot of people said to me after Dayjur's defeat that at least we will always be remembered, but I would much rather have won and been forgotten. I won't forget that day in a hurry."

RICHARD EDMONDSON
NAP: Papaha
(Newmarket 3.05)
NB: Polar Prince
(Newmarket 4.15)

The biggest cheque yesterday was pocketed in Cleveland by Michael Jarvis, whose Blue Iris, a 7,600 guineas purchase, took her earnings to almost £144,000 in the Redcar Two-Year-Old Trophy. Residents close to the North-East track had to keep their windows closed on Monday as a huge chemical fire raged nearby, and the shutters may have been closed again yesterday to prohibit the noise of horseflesh, as 26 runners descended down the straight. At the head of the mass, Blue Iris equalled the juvenile course record as she beat Cayman Kai.

Jarvis's Newmarket neighbour, John Gosden, will today influence Lanfranco Dettori's

decision about appealing against a 10-day ban imposed on Wednesday. If the jockey appeals successfully, he will be free to ride Gosden's Tamure in tomorrow's Champion Stakes. Stanley House's fancied runner in the Cesarewitch is out however as the ground is considered too firm for Isabah, who had been the second favourite.

Gosden has missed out on the chance of lucrative there and he may also be casting wistfully at the Dubai World Cup, for which 48 entrants were announced yesterday. Halling, who was formerly trained by Gosden, will be one of the favourites for the world's richest race at \$4m on 27 March. Others with the whiff of big bucks are Cigale, Penkemp, Freedon's Dancer, Sire de Stal and Sheikh Hamdan's Bahri.

The Sheikh is represented by yet another talent today when Alhaarth offers his unbeaten record for inspection in the Dewhurst Stakes. While PA-PAPA (nap 3.05) may be the best value of the day, it is the Dewhurst, despite its meagre turnout, which will attract most attention. For four of the last five years the race's winner has gone on to British Classic success.

Alhaarth's main rival is thought to be Danehill Dancer, but there were distinctly pessimistic noises emanating from the latter's camp yesterday and it appears that the Sheikh, Hern and Carson should have no worries here. They can reserve those for shadows over the winter in two weeks' time.

Kieran Fallon was in trouble with authority yet again yesterday. The stewards at Redcar gave him a seven-day ban for hitting his mount, Fairwings, over the head as she was playing up at the start. Fallon was banned for six months for dragging Stuart Webster out of the saddle last September and was fined for swearing at a starter at Pontefract in midsummer. He has recently serving an eight-day ban for irresponsible riding.



Naked Welcome (right) beats Sector Vale and Whitechapel (left) at Newmarket yesterday

Photograph: Adam Scott

Fallon hits out

Kieran Fallon was in trouble with authority yet again yesterday. The stewards at Redcar gave him a seven-day ban for hitting his mount, Fairwings, over the head as she was playing up at the start. Fallon was banned for six months for dragging Stuart Webster out of the saddle last September and was fined for swearing at a starter at Pontefract in midsummer. He has recently serving an eight-day ban for irresponsible riding.

NEWMARKET
2.35: WIJARA was an impressive winner at Newbury last time and it is worth taking a chance that he can show the same level of form on this faster surface. Restructure may be fearsome but his stable is not firing, while Ninette may need further.

0000: MY BRANCH faces an easier task than when taking on Blue Duster last time, but the presence of Papaha precludes confidence.



She comes from a stable with a strong band of female fillies and did well from a bad draw in Rio Duvida's race over this track and trip.

3.45: ALHAARTH, favourite for the 1996 £100,000 Guineas and Derby, has won his last two starts on each of his four starts and can cross through his toughest test yet. He faces formidable opponents in Danehill Dancer and Bigga, who have both won at Group One level, and represents a bad betting medium.

0000: ANGUS GREEN (nap 3.05) has had a good second to Dayjur in the Dewhurst and is a good bet.

3.45: LOVELY PROSPECT has been let in lightly for her handicap debut and can hold Polar Prince.

0000: ALICE HANNAH (nap 3.05) has been let in lightly for her handicap debut and can hold Polar Prince.

NEWMARKET

HYPERION
1.30 Shemzzle
2.00 Projection
2.35 WIJARA (map)
3.05 My Branch

GONG: Good to Firm. DRAW ADVANTAGE: None. STALLS: 4-6 - for side; 1-6, 3-4, 5-7, 8-10, 11-12, 13-14, 15-16, 17-18, 19-20, 21-22, 23-24, 25-26, 27-28, 29-30, 31-32, 33-34, 35-36, 37-38, 39-40, 41-42, 43-44, 45-46, 47-48, 49-50, 51-52, 53-54, 55-56, 57-58, 59-60, 61-62, 63-64, 65-66, 67-68, 69-70, 71-72, 73-74, 75-76, 77-78, 79-80, 81-82, 83-84, 85-86, 87-88, 89-90, 91-92, 93-94, 95-96, 97-98, 99-100, 101-102, 103-104, 105-106, 107-108, 109-110, 111-112, 113-114, 115-116, 117-118, 119-120, 121-122, 123-124, 125-126, 127-128, 129-130, 131-132, 133-134, 135-136, 137-138, 139-140, 141-142, 143-144, 145-146, 147-148, 149-150, 151-152, 153-154, 155-156, 157-158, 159-160, 161-162, 163-164, 165-166, 167-168, 169-170, 171-172, 173-174, 175-176, 177-178, 179-180, 181-182, 183-184, 185-186, 187-188, 189-190, 191-192, 193-194, 195-196, 197-198, 199-200, 201-202, 203-204, 205-206, 207-208, 209-210, 211-212, 213-214, 215-216, 217-218, 219-220, 221-222, 223-224, 225-226, 227-228, 229-230, 231-232, 233-234, 235-236, 237-238, 239-240, 241-242, 243-244, 245-246, 247-248, 249-250, 251-252, 253-254, 255-256, 257-258, 259-260, 261-262, 263-264, 265-266, 267-268, 269-270, 271-272, 273-274, 275-276, 277-278, 279-280, 281-282, 283-284, 285-286, 287-288, 289-290, 291-292, 293-294, 295-296, 297-298, 299-300, 301-302, 303-304, 305-306, 307-308, 309-310, 311-312, 313-314, 315-316, 317-318, 319-320, 321-322, 323-324, 325-326, 327-328, 329-330, 331-332, 333-334, 335-336, 337-338, 339-340, 341-342, 343-344, 345-346, 347-348, 349-350, 351-352, 353-354, 355-356, 357-358, 359-360, 361-362, 363-364, 365-366, 367-368, 369-370, 371-372, 373-374, 375-376, 377-378, 379-380, 381-382, 383-384, 385-386, 387-388, 389-390, 391-392, 393-394, 395-396, 397-398, 399-400, 401-402, 403-404, 405-406, 407-408, 409-410, 411-412, 413-414, 415-416, 417-418, 419-420, 421-422, 423-424, 425-426, 427-428, 429-430, 431-432, 433-434, 435-436, 437-438, 439-440, 441-442, 443-444, 445-446, 447-448, 449-450, 451-452, 453-454, 455-456, 457-458, 459-460, 461-462, 463-464, 465-466, 467-468, 469-470, 471-472, 473-474, 475-476, 477-478, 479-479, 480-481, 482-483, 484-485, 486-487, 488-489, 490-491, 492-493, 494-495, 496-497, 498-499, 499-500, 501-502, 503-504, 505-506, 507-508, 509-510, 511-512, 513-514, 515-516, 517-518, 519-520, 521-522, 523-524, 525-526, 527-528, 529-530, 531-532, 533-534, 535-536, 537-538, 539-540, 541-542, 543-544, 545-546, 547-548, 549-550, 551-552, 553-554, 555-556, 557-558, 559-560, 561-562, 563-564, 565-566, 567-568, 569-569, 570-571, 572-573, 573-574, 575-576, 577-578, 579-579, 580-581, 582-583, 583-584, 585-586, 587-588, 589-589, 590-591, 591-592, 593-594, 595-596, 597-598, 599-599, 600-601, 602-603, 603-604, 605-606, 607-608, 609-609, 610-611, 611-612, 612-613, 613-614, 614-615, 615-616, 616-617, 617-618, 618-619, 619-620, 620-621, 621-622, 622-623, 623-624, 624-625, 625-626, 626-627, 627-628, 628-629, 629-630, 630-631, 631-632, 632-633, 633-634, 634-635, 635-636, 636-637, 637-638, 638-639, 639-640, 640-641, 641-642, 642-643, 643-644, 644-645, 645-646, 646-647, 647-648, 648-649, 649-650, 650-651, 651-652, 652-653, 653-654, 654-655, 655-656, 656-657, 657-658, 658-659, 659-660, 660-661, 661-662, 662-663, 663-664, 664-665, 665-666, 666-667, 667-668, 668-669, 669-670, 670-671, 671-672, 672-673, 673-674, 674-675, 675-676, 676-677, 677-678, 678-679, 679-680, 680-681, 681-682, 682-683, 683-684, 684-685, 685-686, 686-687, 687-688, 688-689, 689-690, 690-691, 691-692, 692-693, 693-694, 694-695, 695-696, 696-697, 697-698, 698-699, 699-700, 700-701, 701-702, 702-703, 703-704, 704-705, 705-706, 706-707, 707-708, 708-709, 709-710, 710-711, 711-712, 712-713, 713-714, 714-715, 715-716, 716-717, 717-718, 718-719, 719-720, 720-721, 721-722, 722-723, 723-724, 724-725, 725-726, 726-727, 727-728, 728-729, 729-730, 730-731, 731-732, 732-733, 733-734, 734-735, 735-736, 736-737, 737-738, 738-739, 739-740, 740-741, 741-742, 742-743, 743-744, 744-745, 745-746, 746-747, 747-748, 748-749, 749-750, 750-751, 751-752, 752-753, 753-754, 754-755, 755-756, 756-757, 757-758, 758-759, 759-760, 760-761, 761-762, 762-763, 763-764, 764-765, 765-766, 766-767, 767-768, 768-769, 769-770, 770-771, 771-772, 772-773, 773-774, 774-775, 775-776, 776-777, 777-778, 778-779, 779-780, 780-781, 781-782, 782-783, 783-784, 784-785, 785-786, 786-787, 787-788, 788-789, 789-790, 790-791, 791-792, 792-793, 793-794, 794-795, 795-796, 796-797, 797-798, 798-799, 799-800, 800-801, 801-802, 802-803, 803-804, 804-805, 805-806, 806-807, 807-808, 808-809, 809-810, 810-811, 811-812, 812-813, 813-814, 814-815, 815-816, 816-817, 817-818, 818-819, 819-820, 820-821, 821-822, 822-823, 823-824, 824-825, 825-826, 826-827, 827-828, 828-829, 829-830, 830-831, 831-832, 832-833, 833-834, 834-835, 835-836, 836-837, 837-838, 838-839, 839-840, 840-841, 841-842, 842-843, 843-844, 844-845, 845-846, 846-847, 847-848, 848-849, 849-850, 850-851, 851-852, 852-853, 853-854, 854-855, 85

sport

WORLD MATCHPLAY: Duval's fightback falls short as Japanese hopes fade quickly in the mist

Montgomerie makes a meal of it

Golf

TIM GLOVER
reports from Wentworth

Colin Montgomerie went into lunch five up on David Duval in the first round of the Toyota World Match Play Championship here and the contest went the distance. Perhaps the problem is that the round Scotsman had a sore wrist and a rumbling stomach.

Because of a delay to the start, Montgomerie had only 35 minutes for lunch. "That's not long enough for me," he said. He was not able to enjoy the full Monty, being restricted to sandwiches, a Mars Bar and a Coke. "I would have had a lot more," he said. The abbreviated break also meant that he did not have time to visit the physiotherapist.

It was lack of a leisurely lunch that appeared to have the more disturbing effect on Big Monty. In the morning he cruised round the Burma Road in 66 to Duval's 71 and the American, making his debut at Wentworth, never captured the lead. Duval, sporting a shirt that looked as if it was sponsored by the Chelsea Flower Show, wore sunglasses in the morning when it was misty and when the sun broke through in the afternoon he discarded the shades.

Montgomerie, with birdies at the 23rd and 24th holes, remained five up and was possibly thinking of tea and crumpets when Duval won the 28th, 29th and 30th holes with two birdies and an eagle. Things were looking gaunt for Monty when he missed short puts at the 33rd and 34th holes and he went to the 35th with his lead cut to one. Duval hit a good drive down the penultimate hole but Monty matched it and, after trading birdie fours, was won by one hole by taking control of the 36th.

"It was more of a tiring day than I anticipated," Monty said. "I had to finish four, four and I did." Today in the quarter-finals



Bunker mentality: Bernhard Langer ignores the perils of the eighth at Wentworth as he sees off Sam Torrance yesterday

Photograph: David Ashdown

Montgomerie plays Steve Elkington, the Australian who prevented him from winning the US PGA Championship in Los Angeles in July. In a sudden death play-off Elkington won at the first extra hole. "I only had one hole then," Mooty said. "This time I've got a few more."

The World Match Play, launched in 1964, was not averse to the odd smoker in the field when it was sponsored by Pictorial for 13 years. Colgate came up with a bright-smiled winner in Isao Aoki in 1978 and thereafter the championship at St Andrews,

has been sponsored by the Japanese companies, Sumitomo and Toyota. Alas, the obligatory Japanese player in the field has fallen short since Aoki's achievement. The latest to make a swift exit was Katsuyoshi Tomori, beaten 7 and 6 by Lee Janzen. He was soon joined in a four-wheel drive off the Burma Road and on to the A30 by Sam Torrance who was defeated 5 and 4 by Bernhard Langer.

Thus it was a case of Herr to day, gone Tomori. The Japanese player, who had a good Open Championship at St Andrews, Despite

being under the weather, After the pro-am on Wednesday he developed a fever and called a doctor. Tomori asked to go on a drip but the doctor told him to have a shower - "not too hot and not too cold."

In the season of mists and mellow fever, Tomori had to sweat it out in the morning when fog delayed the start by two hours. "I sweated in the night and did not feel so hot," Tomori said. He went into lunch three down. "I felt OK when I started but I found my putting was affected," Tomori said. Despite

four birdies in 12 holes in the afternoon he was comprehensively dispatched by Janzen who won at the 30th with an eagle. Janzen, 1993 US Open champion and the leading money winner on the US Tour this year, is still smarting from being omitted from the Ryder Cup at Oak Hill a few weeks ago. "I should have been picked," he said. "Winning this would make me feel a better." However, he added: "Most people in the States wouldn't know I'm here."

Torrance was no match for Langer who hardly made a mis-

take. On the first and third holes Torrance was disturbed by mobile phones ringing in the crowd. On the third, his caddie Malcolm Mason told a spectator: "For Christ's sake turn the bloody phone off." Torrance - in a practice round here on Tuesday - received a message on his mobile that he was to play Langer. "Tomorrow Torrance, who won £30,000 for his first-round exit, partners seven-year-old Daniel in a father and son competition at Haligrove School near Camberley, Surrey.

WORLD MATCHPLAY CHAMPIONSHIP - FIRST ROUND

hole	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	Total
Par	4	3	4	5	3	4	4	4	3	4	5	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	72
Yards	4741	155	452	501	191	365	399	389	450	189	376	483	441	178	488	390	571	502	8,867
L JANZEN (US) won 7-6	5	3	4	5	3	4	4	4	4	5	7	5	7	3	4	4	4	4	72
K TOMORI (Japan)	4	3	5	4	3	4	5	4	3	4	5	5	5	7	3	4	4	4	72
S TORRANCE (Sco)	4	3	5	4	2	4	5	4	4	4	5	4	5	4	4	4	4	4	72
B LANGER (Ger) won 5-4	4	3	4	4	2	4	5	4	3	4	5	5	5	6	4	4	4	4	72
C MONTGOMERIE (Sco) won by 1 hole	4	3	5	4	2	4	5	4	4	4	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	72
D DUVAL (US)	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	3	4	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	72
C ROCCI (It) won 4-3	4	3	4	3	2	4	4	4	3	4	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	72
V SINGH (Fiji)	4	3	4	4	3	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	72

TODAY'S TEED-OFF TIMES																		
8.15am and 12.30pm																		E LELLYN
E LELLYN (SA) v L JANZEN (US)																		8.30am and 12.45pm
B LANGER (Ger) v N PRICE (Zim)																		S ELKINGTON (Aus) v C MONTGOMERIE (GB)
S TORRANCE (Sco)																		9am and 1.15pm
C ROCCI (It) v B CRENSHAW (US)																		C ROCCI (It) v B CRENSHAW (US)
C MONTGOMERIE (Sco) won by 1 hole																		(Seeds in capitals)

■ won hole C conceded

Hamed to keep up the psychology

Boxing

Naseem Hamed insisted yesterday that there was no let-up in the psychological assault directed at opponents barring his way to becoming a multi-world champion.

Hamed rejected criticism that he taunted and humiliated Steve Robinson before defeating the Welshman of the World Boxing Organisation featherweight title a fortnight ago.

The 21-year-old, who makes his first defence at London Arena on 9 December, declared: "I out-thought him, outboxed him and outpunched him. I did it in style, just as I said I would. There wasn't a mark on my face at the end. What do I have to do to get the credit I deserve?"

Frank Warren, the promoter, said Hamed was spot at, struck by coins and suffered racial and personal abuse. "Throughout it all, Hamed maintained his cool. You say he humiliated Robinson. We say he did him mentally and physically. Muhammad Ali and Sugar Ray Leonard were praised for that sort of thing," Warren claimed.

Warren is talking to three

possible first-defence opponents and expects to finalise negotiations for an announcement next Tuesday. He revealed that it is becoming difficult to find suitable matches, but hopes for a unification fight against one of the other champions early next year.

That could be Ghana's Alfred Kotey, who defended his WBO bantamweight title at London's York Hall a week tomorrow.

Goulding stakes claim

Rugby League

"I am in an envious position with two top scrum-halves playing for me. I only wish we had the same strength in depth in every position. They are two world-class players," Larder said.

Larder will be hoping Edwards does not go through with his threat to retire from international rugby, which followed accusations that the Wigan captain made racist remarks to Australia's winger John Hopoate. Edwards, who was on the bench for last night's game, strongly denies the allegation.

The England coach showed himself to be hard to please after the demolition of Fiji. "I thought for the first 20 minutes our performance was pretty awesome and it probably knocked the stuffing out of the opposition, but I did feel that in the last 15 to 20 minutes we went off the boil," he said.

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England were impressive in victory as they completely out-classed Fiji and they now look certain to finish top of group one with just the outsiders South Africa to come on Saturday. After that, it will be a semi-final showdown with the winners of pool three, which involves Wales, Western Samoa and France.

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Kiwi call at last for Paul

Rugby

Followers of the game in the north of England will greet the promotion of Henry Paul to tonight's starting line-up as a rare intrusion of sanity in the New Zealand selection process, writes Dave Hadfield.

The Wigan utility back, one of the most glittering talents in the sport, has so far been used only with the most extreme caution by the Kiwi coach, Frank Endacott, and there seemed little early promise that such a scandalous waste of ability would be rectified during this World Cup.

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INTERNATIONAL FOOTBALL VERDICT: Venables vitriol ■ Charlton challenge ■ Brown blast ■ Gould grievance

Forward thinking a priority for England

ENGLAND

GLENN MOORE

Luton Airport was cloaked in fog when England's footballers arrived back from Norway in the early hours of yesterday morning. It was a depressingly appropriate sight, a few hours earlier the direction of the England team had seemed equally indistinct.

While a goalless draw away to Norway is not a bad result, it was achieved through an ordinary performance. In its aftermath, Terry Venables, normally so keen to emphasise performance before result, was singing a different tune. "If that was a qualifying match we would have done the job. It is a good result," Venables said. "I was happy with everyone."

It was a bizarre assessment. While David Seaman enhanced his reputation, and Steve Stone's brief appearance showed promise, Tony Adams and Gary Pallister were the only other players to emerge with credit. Having gained a clean sheet, away from home, against difficult opposition, they and Seaman had every right to feel pleased.

However, Adams and Pallister had only proved what everybody knows: against opponents whose attacking ideas are built on set-pieces and brute force they are as good as anyone in the game. Adams must have felt he was in the middle of an Arsenal training session under George Graham, almost every Norway attack was precipitated by a throw-in or corner.

Stopping Norway, cover of the most creative of teams, is one thing, but breaking them down is another kettle of herring entirely. Where the central defenders, and the rest of the team, was found wanting was in using the ball. With Norway defending deep and in numbers the situation cried out for a defender capable and willing to carry the ball towards them, attacking the space and committing their opponents.

One can understand why Venables is reluctant to criticise his players. Graham Taylor did so and eventually lost them. Club managers are often scathing in their criticism – Frank Clark has inspired several improved performances by such means. But, while a chastened club player will be back in action within a week, an international may be left to fester for a month or more.



Blue mood: the England bench is a picture of concern during Wednesday's night's goalless draw against Norway in Oslo

One player who has received Venables' fullest backing is Alan Shearer. He was included in all but one of Venables' 13 selections – he was injured for the goalless draw with Uruguay – but has scored only against Greece and the United States. His last goal was 13 months and more than 12 hours of football ago.

Although Barnby played fur-

ther forward on Wednesday, the suspicion remains that Shearer is better suited to playing in a partnership, as he does at Blackburn. His pace and close control, the chief requirements for a lone role are, not, by international standards, exceptional. It is his reactions, shooting and strength that impress and those qualities feed on

flick-ons and crosses rather than balls in to feet.

However, he may have Darren Anderton and Paul Gascoigne back to supply him for England's next match, against Switzerland at Wembley next month. David Platt, if fit, can also expect a recall, if only for the goals he provides. With John Barnes also back in contention

England may have a completely reshaped midfield. But do not expect Matt Le Tissier to be recalled, even though his passing might have opened up Norway's stalling defence.

Norway's lack of ambition was partly dictated by their next match, away to the Netherlands on 15 November. Assuming the Czech Republic beat

Luxembourg at home the same night, Norway must gain a draw to qualify for the European Championship – and put the Netherlands out.

Only two teams are certain of being here next summer, Spain and Russia, the winners of Groups Two and Eight. Most of the following will also be here: Romania, France, Denmark

Photograph: David Ashdown

The turner syndrome: Hugh Bateson fears that the tabloids are turning on El Tel

That stinks, Tel

TEL-IBLE!

DO IT, TEL!

Not the best idea

of the season

Stand by for 'Levi's' headlines.

The CIO draw to decide a new town for the England coach's reception by the tabloid press – "Tel" in the Sun, "the Man" in the Mirror, "Levi's" in the Express – is a worse idea, however. Then, the same mistake can be犯 if he can't refuse, and it looks certain, as Venables is about to get the treatment meted out to both of his predecessors. Graham turned, favouring Bateson, while Venables, a

man in his 50s, has been to the CIO draw to decide a new town for the England coach's reception by the tabloid press – "Tel" in the Sun, "the Man" in the Mirror, "Levi's" in the Express – is a worse idea, however. Then, the same mistake can be犯 if he can't refuse, and it looks certain, as Venables is about to get the treatment meted out to both of his predecessors. Graham turned, favouring Bateson, while Venables, a

squad and Les Ferdinand from the Oslo game, and before he even mentioned internationals. September's goalless draw with Colombia was greeted with criticism that the England team could draw a crowd of only 20,000 to Wembley, and the Euro 96 draw to "the European Championships" will now take place under both a cloud and intense scrutiny.

It is an event which seems

set to be "Tel-ible".

during the 1998 competition – the first time in the name of God, "God" appeared, and Taylor was treated similarly in 1992 – especially after the substitution of Gary Lineker.

So at least Venables knows what to expect. And, as he said to his critics as recently as June, he seems determined to face it. "You can say what you like, it doesn't bother me." They will, and we are about to see whether it does.

Lisbon holds key to Republic's fate

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

PHIL SHAW

Fear, tension, euphoria, relief. The Republic of Ireland experienced a gamut of emotions in the course of defeating Latvia in Dublin. That was certainly cracking enough. The climax to Group Six threats to be the stuff of coronaries.

Before their summer collapse, the Republic were perhaps tempted to view next month's visit to Portugal as a celebratory jaunt. A few days in the autumn sun at Estoril, then into Lisbon to toast the formality of qualification for another beano: the European Championship finals in England.

This time, they could yet be

forced as one of the two second-placed teams with the worst records to play-off at Anfield on 15 December.

Charlton is not a man for musing on the maths of it all. Nor is he the type of who, needing a win, sets out to secure it. His instinct, honed over years of backs-to-the-wall miserliness with Don Revie's Leeds, is to counsel caution and damage-limitation.

He was under the impression that Portugal had already qualified. In fact, having lost at Lansdowne Road and with results between the leading teams counting in the event of their finishing level on points, they will be desperate to avoid a defeat which could see them squeezed out.

If Wednesday's match proves

to be Charlton's last in Dublin, the best that can be said is that the Republic won. He appeared almost obsessed beforehand by the problems one of Europe's fledgling nations might cause. His players, unsurprisingly, looked short of confidence and lacked the old intensity before scoring.

John Aldridge stayed calm to dispatch a penalty and soon headed a second, though Niall Quinn was the unsung hero. Arthur Zakreshevski stuck to him like a tattoo, and a more volatile striker might have been screaming for a penalty at the instant Quinn selflessly set up Steve Staunton in the prelude to the breakthrough.

Trepidation swept across the stadium like a shadow after a late Latvian reply. Tracing its origins back to an Irish cross

that the visiting keeper picked off, Charlton let slip the kind of confession which may count against him when the dust settles on this campaign and, possibly, his nine-year reign.

"The ball should never have been delivered to that area," he said. "We should've been playing for corners then. It's not my way to be positive. Not at that stage. It's bloody common sense."

■ Bryan Hamilton, the Northern Ireland manager, has promised the Republic his team will try to help them qualify by beating Austria in Belfast on 15 November. "I will say good luck to Jack and the Republic if they qualify," he said. "I felt all along that Portugal and the Republic would go through. They were the best teams in the group."

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set to be "Tel-ible".

Wales
GUY HODGSON

It has not taken Bobby Gould long to learn an essential part of Welshness is to hold a grievance against the English. Yesterday, the morning after a good performance against Germany, the man from across the Bristol Channel sounded like he had been born and bred sharpening his claws in Tiger Bay.

The Wales manager's targets were the BBC (mainly) and Terry Venables (partially) which was tub-thumping stuff following a rousing display from his players against the team ranked third in the world. The Welsh had lost 2-1 but gained enough confidence for Gould to attack from strength.

Radio Five Live was his particular target and its attention on Wednesday night to reports on England's friendly at the expense of Wales, who, after all, were playing in a European Championship qualifying match.

"There's more countries than England," he said, "and we deserve more recognition. If I've stood up to anything in my career it's about being cheated. That satirical radio station needs to get its act together. I feel cheated for the supporters and I feel cheated for the staff. It's a disgrace."

Gould contacted the BBC on Wednesday and yesterday to express his anger and he will be on the phone again over the next few days to Lancaster Gate. This time it will be to continue pestering for a match between Wales and England, something he suggested to Venables within days of his appointment 10 weeks ago.

"I've heard nothing since," Gould said. "He's got dates available why doesn't he pick up the offer? It's a great game for the country. I think he's afraid of playing us."

"I'm going to keep knocking on the door because I know the match would be good for English football. He will learn more from playing as he will with some of the games England have taken part in. We are a second-class nation. We are a very good football side and we will prove it."

Scotland pick up the bill for McAllister's injury

SCOTLAND

The Scottish Football Association's insurance brokers are to say Gary McAllister's wages will be fit again following the Leeds United midfield player's injury against Sweden on Wednesday night in Stockholm.

It left the Leeds manager, Howard Wilkinson, angry over the release of internationals. "I had an agreement with Craig Brown and the player that, if Gary wasn't fit he wouldn't play, and if he was fit he would only turn out for part of the game. Yet he was carried off after nearly an hour.

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Training trip lands teams in trouble

Monday

There are likely to be some strange results in tomorrow's Women's National League programme, writes Bill Colwill. This is due to the Great Britain players being absent from their club sides because of a training trip to Spain, which has been brought forward a few days.

Lesley Hobley, captain of the defending champions, Blough, who will miss several of their leading lights, said: "I am extremely disappointed and frustrated. We have a bare 11 for the visit of Doncaster."

Suffolk Canada Ltd will be missing their three internationals for the visit of Hightown, while Clifton and Ipswich will both be missing a player as the two unbeaten teams clash.

American football The National Football League will allow Dean Sanders to play for the Dallas Cowboys, but send his second-year, \$35m boy, and his team, to the Super Bowl in September. The structure of his salary cap rules, however, will take him to the field for the Cowboys as soon as he recovers from surgery on his left ankle. Under Sanders' deal with the Cowboys, his salary during the first three years is at the league minimum of \$173,000 for veteran players, while his stated average salary in the three seasons of the contract that is not currently capped (1998-2001) is \$5.5m.

Badminton

Andy Gooch, the British Olympic manager, is preparing to take the controversial step of not sending a team to the Atlanta Olympics in August. London, however, is not to blame for his decision. Gooch has been extended by two meetings with the British Olympic Association and the British Badminton Association. The former is to discuss the future of the British Badminton Association, while the latter is to discuss the future of the British Badminton Association.

Drug's in sport

Drug testing at next summer's Olympic Games could include a procedure to detect human growth hormone, long considered a performance-enhancing drug used by athletes and body-builders. It was reported yesterday that a Swiss medical team had developed a reliable test to detect the hormone which could be marketed by the International Olympic Committee. The test is to be used in the Atlanta Games. The hormone, which is used to increase lean body mass and strength, is anabolic steroids, most of which are detectable through the current system of urine testing.

Basketball

EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP (Lithuania) Semi-final round: England 89 Estonia 91.

Cricket

Les Geroni, the New Zealand captain, refused to start the three-day match against India's national champions Bombay yesterday, claiming the outcome was too dangerous. His opposite number, Sachin Tendulkar, agreed and the pair persuaded the umpires to delay the game, only to be up because of heavy overnight rain, for a further hour. India won by 10 runs.

Handball

EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP (Paris) Final: France 32 Norway 29.

Ice hockey

EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP (Denmark) Men's singles second round: W. Fennell (USA) 2-0 M. Danner (USA) 6-4 7-6.

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Hodgson set for release to Inter

CLIVE WHITE

As it turned out, Roy Hodgson, rather than Terry Venables, was the Englishman whom Internazionale sought as their new coach and the man who has all but steered Switzerland to the finals of the European Championship confirmed yesterday that he planned to accept the Italian club's lucrative offer.

That, however, will depend upon the Swiss expressing their gratitude for the success the south Londoner has had upon them in three and a half years by releasing him from his contract which is out to expire until after next summer's finals in England. The understanding is that they will do just that.

Speaking in the wake of his team's 3-0 victory over Hungary that all but sealed their

